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BELGIUM IN BONDAGE

by

JAN-ALBERT GORIS

Introduction by

JAMES HILTON

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THIS IS A WAR TIME BOOK. SIZE, WEIGHT OF PAPER AND MARGINS HAVE BEEN REDUCED TO CONSERVE MATERIAL NECESSARY FOR THE WAR EFFORT.

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To

GEORGES THEUNIS

a great servant of his country

this book is respectfully

dedicated.

"The Belgians refuse to submit to discipline and always try to evade the law. In Germany everybody submits to discipline, even when the people do not like it."

General Reeder,
German Military Administrator
of Belgium, 1942.

Introduction

BY

JAMES HILTON

THERE IS TO BE SAID ABOUT THOSE WHO WRITE NOT for all time, but for an age: if they write well enough they have a good chance to outlast many of the would-be all-timers. I do not know, and nobody knows, what books of today will be widely read or highly regarded a century hence, but I do know that some of the best current writing goes into journalism, and that future historians will have an exciting time rummaging amongst it.

The work of Jan-Albert Goris seems to me to be of this class, so that it is well worth having between covers. Those whose job it has been since war began to sift through the voluminous official information and propaganda sheets put out by the Allied countries cannot fail to have noted, sooner or later, the regular editorials in "News from Belgium"—always forthrightly, sometimes brilliantly written, with a sharp cutting edge, a humane temper, and an always definite point of view. Naturally that point of view is that of Belgium in particular and of the enslaved countries in general, but more personally, it is the point of view of a cultured European and of a scholar. Incidentally, M. Goris did not begin to write in English until 1941, and to my somewhat amazed comment replied: "I think that the qualities you are kind enough to

discover in my writing are mainly due to the fact that my vocabulary is limited and that, therefore, I am forced to express myself as clearly as possible, as I have no way of camouflaging by an abundant use of words." Which calls to mind the famous slogan in *Alice in Wonderland:* "Take care of the sense and the sounds will take care of themselves."

Because it is the sense, after all, that matters nowadays, and M. Goris, by so clearly expressing the ideas and feelings of his countrymen, has done service both to them and to us.

The enslaved nations are governed a good deal by the logic of their position. They may not think so globally as some of us in the larger nations; and if also they dream less spaciously, that may be because their own dream is so near and so urgent—the survival, redemption, and reclamation of their own homes. Pre-war Europe, except for the Nazi menace, was good to them, and must seem even better in retrospect; hence their major war-aim is understandably a return to pre-war status and frontiers, minus that menace. Whether, in a world in which frontiers have already been revolutionised by airplanes and radio, this is utopian or nostalgic or merely practical can be debated, but at least we of the big nations cannot blame the small ones for knowing exactly what they want when we ourselves are in such doubt and disagreement as to what exactly *we* want. There is, too, among our more spacious planners an occasional tendency to regard the smaller nations as somehow a nuisance for being small, and the titans as correspondingly to be admired for being big. This, of course, is not so; it is the fortune, good or bad, of history and geography. At certain periods nations have

managed to keep out of trouble by being small; today, however, they seem fated to be victims for the same reason. The twentieth century *Zeitgeist* may swing even further against them yet (wasn't it Lord Salisbury who forecast that the big nations would get bigger and stronger and the small ones smaller and weaker?), but that is no reason why we should, like some modern geopoliticians, seem irritated by their mere existence.

Among these smaller countries Belgium is unique, for this is her second enslavement within a lifetime. It is probably true that no one outside the Europe of today can really grasp such a tragedy; we may know the facts and sympathise to the utmost, yet all that is less than to have endured and to be enduring still. One thing is certain—that the free spirit and true civilization of a country like Belgium is something the world cannot afford to lose either now or in the future, and it is M. Goris's achievement to have demonstrated this.

JAMES HILTON

Preface

THIS BOOK IS NOT INTENDED TO GIVE A COMPLETE chronological exposé of what has happened to Belgium since May 10, 1940, when for the second time in twenty-five years the Germans invaded that country. The facts about the invasion are already common knowledge: they have been discussed first in the heat of battle, later on with calm and due consideration of all the available information. One has come to see them in their right proportion, and as the war went on they acquired a new and deeper significance as details in the prologue of a drama which has not yet come to an end. They belong to history.

It can be said now that in 1940 Belgium suffered as heavily in its physical as in its moral aspects and that it stood up magnificently under the trial. William L. Shirer has testified to the fact that as long as the odds were even "the Belgians fought like lions." They were defeated and had to surrender, crushed as they were by the first onslaught of a military machine which after four years of war is still not destroyed. So surprising was the might and the brutality of the German attack, so unexpected its fantastic results, that those who had to explain the facts to their peoples resorted to slander and romantic interpretations. The surrender of the Belgian Army was "explained" by French Premier Paul Reynaud by the simple motive of treason, the fall of France was attributed to the influence of a headstrong woman as if the course of history had ever depended on pulp magazine fancies of that kind. Time

has cleared up all those wild stories. Time has avenged the injustices and killed most of the lies uttered in panic or in ignorance. The testimony of Admiral Lord Keyes, the hero of the raid on Zeebrugge and originator of the commandos, the statement by Lt. Colonel R. D. Brown, American military attaché to Belgium at the time of the invasion, have demolished the accusations against King Leopold and his army. It is known now that they did their duty, that they withstood superior numbers in a gallant spirit and that they gave in only when everything except honor was lost.

Since June 1940 night has fallen over Belgium. The Germans have tried to transform this country, the very birthplace of municipal freedom and progressive democracy, into an air-tight region. They have not succeeded. Belgium found its voice again no later than a few days after the invasion was completed. Through the underground press, more abundant and better organized than anywhere else in occupied Europe, through thousands of private channels news leaked out of that terrorized country. It is mainly from these sources that this book has been written, but the Nazi-controlled press, the Nazified radio in Belgium, the official German gazette and other publications are also drawn upon in this work. Nevertheless this book must remain incomplete. This is so for many reasons, but chiefly because in several cases the disclosure of certain facts would endanger the safety and the lives of people inside Belgium. Sometimes also it is because information is onesided and testimony is not liable to examination and checking. Therefore this picture of Belgium, as would be the case for any of the occupied countries,

may look quite incomplete; that may sometimes lead to unjust conclusions or to hasty judgments.

This is especially pathetic as far as King Leopold is concerned. The Germans have confined him in his palace at Laeken as a prisoner of war. Dragged to Berchtesgaden when Hitler was at the zenith of his power, the King refused the Fuehrer's bids for collaboration. Through their Quisling press, the Nazis repeatedly tried to induce him to form a puppet government. They even sent their No. 1 Quisling, Léon Degrelle, to plead their cause. The King steadily and courageously refused to fall into the collaborationist trap. He has remained unmoved, but his dignified silence and his unbending attitude have an eloquence of their own. Accepting strictly his lot as a prisoner of war, he is certainly no less a living symbol of his country's sorrowful state than those sovereigns, his more fortunate colleagues, who live in exile from their homeland in a free world.

For two years it has been the author's task to give the American public the news that reached these shores from occupied Belgium. He has tried to do this in such a way as to bring nearer to the people of the United States those 8,500,000 Belgians who live under the heel of the Nazis. He does not want you to believe that his is a nation of 8,500,000 heroes, for there is no such nation, but he would like you to know that as a whole the people of Belgium have understood that this war is a struggle of the *common people.* The common people of Belgium, in every occupation, in every trade, in every layer of society, are fighting this fight. They have a great deal which they share with the common man in America: the same ideas on many

subjects, the same disgusts and the same affections, the same beliefs and the same loyalties, the same ideals when it comes to the essentials of life. It is because of this that the author has tried most of the time to look at the human side of things rather than to attempt a scientific study of the Nazi régime, of which the full horror cannot yet be revealed.

Bitter as his task has been, he has greatly appreciated this opportunity to repay, be it only in small part, the debt of gratitude he owes to this country—that far-off land which through the relief sent to Belgium contributed to saving his life as a boy, in the first World War and of which, later on, having come to know it and to look at it carefully, he became profoundly and irrevocably enamored.

J.-A. G.

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I

CHRONICLE OF OPPRESSION

BELGIUM'S POSITION IN THE ALLIED WORLD

1.—"Little Belgium" —a Big Country

To Europeans in the United States, one of the most remarkable commercials on the radio is the one which tells short men that they can increase their height by wearing a type of shoe which, thanks to a certain device, makes them instantly and secretly two or three inches taller. The advertisement concludes with the subtle remark that "Now you can be taller than she is." At first it sounds very encouraging—this remedy to correct nature's mistake or neglect—but when you go into it deeper, you're bound to calm down. For, after all, if, having impressed "her" by your height, events follow their normal and natural course, you will have to take those remarkable shoes off, and "she" will feel at the same time disappointed and deceived.

No, really, it seems far better to be content with one's stature. After all, there are as many tall as short idiots. But even so, some people resent being called "Shorty," especially by those who have no reason to put on airs. The same thing happens, collectively, with the inhabitants of a small country like Belgium. Wherever the Belgians go, they are outraged by the fact that people always speak

about "little" Belgium or refer to it as a "small country," and they fear that some day their friends may even go so far in their endearments as to say "cute little Belgium."

Of course, Belgium is not as big as the U.S.S.R. or the United States, but it might be interesting to examine how small a country Belgium really is. After all, tall or short, big or small are comparative notions. Furthermore, even basic concepts change rapidly in our days. We are told to discard the maps we used yesterday for new ones which give us quite a different idea of relations and distances between geographical points.

Belgium has about 8,500,000 inhabitants, which makes its population four times bigger than Norway's, more than twice as large as Denmark's, nearly three times as large as Finland's and larger than the combined populations of Lithuania, Latvia and Esthonia. It has more inhabitants than Portugal and three times as many as Ireland. It contains more people than are living on the entire west coast of the United States.

Eight million five hundred thousand Belgians are crowded into a territory no larger than Maryland, but they do not seem to feel inconvenienced by such propinquity. They like it apparently, for relatively few of them left Belgium; unlike other small countries of Europe, the proportion of Belgians in the United States and in Canada, as compared to those living in the home country, is extremely small. It has been said, for instance, that there are as many Finns in America as in Finland. Out of 8,500,000 Belgians, there are not more than 100,000 in the United States and about 30,000 in Canada.

On the other hand, foreigners so appreciated Belgium that nearly half a million of them made it their home.

Although there were 710 inhabitants per square mile in Belgium, as against 352 in Germany, the Belgians never felt the urge to expand or conquer living space for their surplus population. They lived peacefully and modestly, and even after the first World War, they did not indulge in plans for territorial aggrandizement, which circumstances might have justified.

The war has drawn the attention of the world to the Belgian colonial empire in Africa, the Belgian Congo. It is two thirds as large as the United States, and its strategic and economic function in this war becomes more apparent every day. But does the general public appreciate the tremendous work of civilization and social progress the Belgians have done in a country which was completely savage fifty years ago? Since 1908, Belgium as a whole has taken care of the Congo. It has developed this vast territory, liberated its population from slavery, and is educating it to civilized ideas of government. Nevertheless, in *The Valley of Decision,* Marcia Davenport uses the Belgian Congo as the perfect example of an "enslaved country," and Dorothy Canfield, commenting on Selwyn James' *South of the Congo,* in the Book of the Month Club review of March 1943, states that "the Belgians keep their black subjects alive only so that they can work for their white masters." This is a grossly unfair conclusion to James' explanation that where the native works for a white concern, he is adequately paid and is able to maintain a fair standard of living because he thereby becomes a healthier and more valuable employee. No reader can afford to take either Mrs. Davenport's or Miss Canfield's statements at their face value, but should compare them with Mr. James' conclusions, namely:

"The Belgian Congo's present and pre-war years are blessed with an enlightened native policy. The black man here is the best-fed, the best-housed and best educated in all the territories from the Cape to Cairo. . . ." and "The Belgian Congo can boast the best and most efficient native system, broadly speaking, in all Africa. Here I found the happiest blacks on the continent. They were well-fed and healthy and usually adequately paid."

In 1940, Belgium and its King Leopold were for a while blamed for the Allied disaster. The little fellow was a welcome scapegoat. Later on, both French and English authorities had to recognize that Belgium stood up very well. It is now evident that she did her duty in full measure. When the war broke out, more than ten per cent of the population was under arms or in the army reserve. On the same basis, the American Army would be composed of 14,000,000 men. The Belgian Army was first to bear the brunt of the German attack on the West. On a front not deeper than a hundred miles, it suffered the German Blitzkrieg during 18 terrible days. The Dutch Army had to give in after three or four days of actual fighting. The heroic Poles were defeated after a three-week campaign, and the French campaign did not take more than 20 days. When the Belgian Army surrendered on May 28, 1940, things looked very bad indeed for Belgium. The armed forces could not escape to England, and were sent to prison in Germany. The King was imprisoned in his residence, and after the French defeat, the Belgian Government was practically a captive of the contemptible Pétain régime.

Now, however, things are quite different. From a state of almost complete prostration Belgium has arisen again

and is doing its full share in the hard task of winning this war. It has rightly been said that there are no "slight" casualties, there are only casualties. It is the same with the Allied countries, fighting the Axis: there are no "small" countries; each of them is important, this one through its territorial size, the other through its population, or through its natural resources, or through the moral values it represents. No one would honestly dare to say that Greece is a "small" country in this war: its moral significance is as great as Russia's. And for those who take the trouble to examine Belgium's record, it will be clear that there is nothing small about her. Now, as in 1914, greatness is her share and also her burden.

2.—*Board and Lodging Paid Up*

BEFORE PEARL HARBOR, WHEN NAZI PROPAGANDA IN the United States was still going full swing, one of the most persistent rumors spread was that the small nations, far from being assets to Great Britain, were liabilities: the exiled kings and governments were all supported by the British. England had erected a façade of allies to impress the world, but this façade was, in actual fact, merely

a bunch of insolvent boarders who couldn't even pay the rent. Having no money to meet their expenses, they were at the beck and call of their masters, and their pretense of independence and autonomy was just hokum.

This campaign has left its traces and from time to time provincial columnists, inspired by isolationist subcurrents in their minds, are ready to spring on the public the old myth of the poor and hungry relatives living at the expense of an all-too-naive Uncle Sam.

In the case of Belgium, the truth is exactly the opposite. Like other threatened countries, Belgium had taken certain precautions to avoid confiscation of her national funds in case of an invasion. Large deposits were made in the United States, in England and in France. Needless to say, no deposits were made at the Reichsbank of Berlin. The pattern of the first World War, still clear in the memory of the Belgians, did not for a moment permit the thought that the Banque de France was not a safe place for the nation's gold. The collapse of France changed all that, and when the Belgian Government ordered the Banque de France to ship her deposits to London, this same bank shipped them to Africa and at the first request of the Nazis handed them over to the enemy.

Before May 10, 1940, the gold reserve of the National Bank of Belgium ranked fourth in the world. It ran close to $720,000,000. This sum, except for a portion ceded to the Nazis by Vichy, was saved and is the basis of the Belgian Government's financial establishment in Great Britain. Revenue is derived also from the Belgian state-owned ships which are participating in convoy work in the Atlantic and elsewhere. Besides this, the government can raise

loans in its well-developed, economically-flourishing colony, the Belgian Congo.

In 1941, the Belgian Ambassador Extraordinary in the United States, Mr. Georges Theunis, put a lien on the Vichy funds in America to the sum of $240,000,000. The lawsuit is still in process, but the Belgian Government has won the first few rounds.

With its unencumbered funds the Belgian Government has reorganized its services in Great Britain. It has equipped and trained its own forces, infantry, artillery units, motorized troops and skytroopers. The Belgian section of the British Navy is on its own financially, and so are the Belgian aviators—more numerous today in the RAF than they were in the entire Belgian Air Force on the eve of the invasion.

About 30,000 Belgian refugees left for England after the invasion. They were penniless, ignorant of the language, ill-adapted to their new surroundings. Entire hospitals and children's homes were brought with them, and for a long time they were cared for and completely maintained by official funds. Today a great number of them have become self-sufficient.

At the same time, the Belgian Government provides for its 80,000 war prisoners in Germany by sending them food, tobacco and whatever else the regulations allow.

Belgium's African colony is in an even better position. It has become an important economic center, an African arsenal of democracy. Belgium furnishes raw materials and manufactured commodities to Great Britain and the United States. From a purely commercial standpoint, the balance would appear to be on the Belgian side.

During the last two years Belgium has made a gift of $400,000 to Great Britain for the purchase of Spitfires and the Belgian Congo raised about $1,000,000 for the same purpose through popular subscriptions.

From South America, from Canada, from all over the world, Belgian money is put generously at the disposal of the allied war effort.

3.—*Belgium's Internal Problems*

ON A NORMAL JULY 21ST THE AVERAGE BELGIAN WOULD either get up very early and go fishing—(we may leave him there for we know the rest of his sad and boastful story)—or he would rise very late and have a look at his newspapers. The one he had to read for professional reasons would be conservative, the other, read for information or sometimes for pleasure, would be a little more on the left side. On that day both sheets would display large pictures of the royal family and in very bold type some politician would try to tell by means of an impressive anthology of platitudes why Belgium was such a good country and how its kings were the best and smartest on the European scene. At times a provincial poetess felt

inspired and contributed a noble poem in which the words honor, liberty, blood—(poetical spinsters usually write a lot about blood)—would abound. Except for the author and her bridge partners nobody would read the poem. As for the politician's text, notwithstanding the heavy type, only a few schoolteachers would look at it, as a possible source of inspiration for a patriotic address on next commencement day.

Just like the citizens of every other sound country, the Belgians took their National Day for granted. They felt that as far as the collective feasting and official rejoicing were concerned, let George do it. After all, if it was a fine day—(even that could happen)—those who enjoyed authority in the state had to show up publicly and suffer the inconveniences of going to a parade or to a church celebration instead of dozing happily alongside some quiet canal or having many cool glasses of beer in a noisy and cosy café. So it came to pass very often that the 21st of July was a day of great annoyance for all those connected with public life.

There was, of course, a military parade before the royal palace. The army passed by and connoisseurs tried to recognize some new trinkets among the weapons. Wisecrackers made saucy comments when a single tank showed up. "The other one is in repair," they used to say. But mothers and sweethearts looked eagerly for their boys in the ranks and there always was a moment of emotion when Prince Charles, the King's brother, marched past, lowering his officer's sword to Leopold, the symbol of the State. The invalids of the last war sat in the front row and they had huge bunches of flowers in their laps. Under the strain of the heat and the weight of his equipment

some soldier on guard might faint or a horse might slip and sidestep, frightening the children on the sidewalks. Otherwise there were no incidents.

But the acute suffering came in the cathedrals. There a Te Deum was sung and all the office holders, small or big, were supposed to be present in uniform or in white tie. It was an ordeal. Not for those who had spent a lot of money on a brilliant uniform and who had only that one occasion a year to impress the grocer at the corner, but for the unfortunate individuals who had to fight with their white tie and put up combat against their starched shirts in the summer heat. The old gothic churches were chilly and while the solemn sentences of the Latin hymn thundered under the vaults, the victims of patriotic duty secretly dreamed of the ceremonies their heathen forefathers used to perform in lofty glades under fine old elm trees, comfortably clad in floating white robes, cool and airy like last century's nightgowns. When everybody had praised the Lord for His blessings, one could go home and have lunch and forget about the good old constitution for the rest of the year.

At night there were fireworks in the suburbs. Nasty, nervous crackers burst in the moist night air. Children's eyes opened wide at these marvels and girls clung closer to their boy friends whenever an especially forceful contraption exploded with treacherous suddenness. When the last cracker had sizzled down, the national anthem was played and those among the crowd who remembered more than the first line hesitatingly undertook to sing. The others just hummed the tune or sang "ta-ra-ra-ra." The next day the rains resumed and the newspapers complained again that Belgium was a little country and that

evidently it was going to the dogs unless, pretty soon, something happened.

Those were happy days. One lived in political luxury. One could afford to throw the Cabinet out of office for no reason more important than the unpopular appointment of a mayor in a town of 3,201 inhabitants. It was a normal community confident of its future. But it took its liberties for granted, it looked upon those who wanted to inspire the masses with patriotic ardor as swollen-headed and possibly dangerous individuals. It was considered poor taste to insist on the love of the fatherland for the simple reason that one was supposed to love it. An eloquent patriotism evoked suspicion.

Some clever Frenchman has defined the fatherland as "a way of life on which we all agree." Incomplete as this definition may be, it has a point. To the casual onlooker the Belgians may sometimes have given the spectacle of utter division but in fact they all agreed, even on the fact that on some problems they were persistently to disagree.

It was said that they were divided between Fascists and Democrats. Fascism being essentially loud-mouthed, foreign observers heard a lot about it, but when the Belgians were asked to make a decision on this issue, they gave the Fascists the most downright political beating they experienced anywhere in the world. From 22 members in Parliament their number was reduced to 4 and even one of those deserted after the election.

It was said that they were divided on the issue of religion, that Catholics considered Liberals as the devil incarnate and that Liberals regarded Catholics as mental troglodytes. But in matters of national and international importance, both groups worked beautifully together and

on both sides the best people knew that one school of thought would never be able to absorb the other completely: they were conscious of the fact that if some are willing to die for their belief, others are as ready to make that sacrifice to assert their lack of faith.

It was said that the Flemings could not stand the Walloons and vice-versa, and that the language problem was insoluble, but with all their bickering and sometimes byzantine discussions, they established both language groups on an equal legal basis. When the war broke out even those extremists who later became avowed traitors proclaimed their loyalty to the cause of Belgium. They knew all too well that their constituents would not have followed them if they had taken another stand.

Belgium had been depicted as the museum of horrors of the capitalistic system in the 19th century and indeed the very rapid industrialization of the country led to a number of excesses. However, by 1930, Belgium had the most complete set of social laws that any country in Europe, with the possible exception of Sweden, could boast.

Belgium was used to speak her mind among the powers of Europe. She was among the first countries to vote sanctions against Italy although she could have been influenced by the dynastic bonds existing between the two countries. Belgium took a stand, a very decided one, when she understood in 1936 that international pledges were giving her little real protection and that she had to count on herself as far as her safety was concerned. She built up an army that in May 1940 comprised nearly 10 per cent of her population and for years she spent more than 20 per cent of her budget on armaments.

The Belgians wanted to remain neutral, for the very

sound reasons that they were fully acquainted with the horrors of war and their participation in a conflict could not be of decisive influence. During the "phony war" they were covered with insults from both sides and still at this moment post factum prophets tell them that they should spontaneously have joined the Allies. It's the old story of seeing the mote in one's brother's eye—as if the United States had taken up arms before it was attacked at Pearl Harbor.

Such was Belgium's life, such the Belgians' policy. In 1940, they first held the position of the victim, later they had the even less enviable one of the scapegoat. For three years now, their country has been plundered, their patriots killed, their population abducted in abject slavery to the Reich. On the 21st of July, their temporary masters tell them how to behave. There are no flags, no parades, no songs. There are no flowers on the monuments of the Belgian and Allied soldiers. The first year of the occupation the Germans authorized the singing of a Te Deum in the churches, so that the Quisling officials they had appointed might display their "loyalty" and mix with the good Belgians. But several bishops in the provinces who wanted to avoid this scandalous promiscuity refused to officiate.

If we read the handwriting on the wall of the Europa-Festung correctly, the next national day will be celebrated in a free Belgium. Nobody will go fishing then. Nobody will make fun of those who say that they love their country and that they are ready to accept sacrifices in order that it may exist. Nobody will try to be smart about anything for everybody will feel that we, the living, will be watched by the dead, by the fallen soldiers, by the 10,000 civilians

wantonly killed in the Blitz, by the thousands of patriots murdered by German courts, by the pathetic, innocent hostages, by the thousands of children who through starvation and cold have been physically ruined for life. They will watch the Belgians who survived the ordeal, they will watch the Allies, to find out if the living, forgetful and fickle as they are, will use the peace to apply some sugary ersatz of Christian charity to our enemies. For they expect us to brand the hot iron of treason on the front of those who failed us, and they want to see that those who took to the sword shall justly and rightly perish by the sword.

1.—In Flanders Fields...

ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL JOBS OF GERMAN PROPaganda is the spreading of the rumor, in certain circles of the free world, that the Flemish people as a whole are in the palm of the Nazi hand and that 4,500,000 Flemings, representing about 60 per cent of the population of Belgium, have welcomed the wonderful blessings of the New Order.

As usual the Germans have followed in this matter the golden rule which Mr. Hitler laid down in the few readable pages of his paranoic masterpiece, *Mein Kampf,* according to which, when you tell a lie, make it a whopper, a beauty, so big that no one will think you could have had the nerve to invent such a falsehood.

The Germans have been working for many, many years on the Flemish problem. In the first world war, they succeeded in exploiting a latent discontent among Flemish intellectuals who were dissatisfied with the slow progress of legislation to grant the Flemish language and the Flemish people equal rights with French and the French-speaking population of Belgium. Little did the Germans care about straightening out discrepancies which, due to the reawakening of the Flemish consciousness, were normally doomed to disappear. They wanted to divide the

country, to bring about opposition between French and Flemish-speaking people, to provoke an internal dislocation of Belgium which would prepare the way for and facilitate its final annexation. A minority, banking on a German victory, followed this policy.

In Belgian politics, the twenty years between 1918 and 1938 were devoted, to a large extent, to a series of legislative measures which finally assured the Flemish an equal status in the State. After 1939, the problem ceased to be a political issue and became mainly a question of social evolution and administrative adaptation which would necessarily take some time.

Peaceful compromise between the two racial groups was so well under way that the Nationalistic Party in Parliament practically had no other program but to exploit noisily and with shameless violence minor incidents of Belgian political life. Members of this group, which had preached a rapprochement with Holland as a solution to the Flemish problem because of the similarity of language, declared in 1940 that if Holland were invaded by Germany that would not be a reason for Belgium to go to war. The logical outcome of their policy was that after May 10, 1940, they put themselves completely at the disposal of the Nazis. The Walloon Rexists took the same attitude, and both groups tried to seize power in the occupied territory.

But, although the Germans may be brutes and torturers, they are not lunatics. They have one thing at least in common with the British—they believe that a fact is more respectable than a Lord Mayor. They soon found out that these groups represented neither the Walloons nor the Flemings, but consisted only of a small minority of am-

bitious, misled or fanatic people, speculating on a German victory. For two years now, both groups have tried to gain influence. In the beginning even Adolf Schickelgruber appeared to help them. He always referred to the two racial groups separately, as if they did not constitute a nation, but later on he abandoned that distinction and spoke of both groups as Belgian.

The Nazis watched for some time the performance of abasement and platitudes the Quislings gave and concluded that this policy was not yielding them enough. Many times have the two diminutive Fascist parties courted for power. Never did the Germans give them anything more than a shadow of authority. It was all right, said the Germans, when the Fascists tried to recruit some volunteers for the Russian front or when they wanted to help the German gendarmerie in the food control, but when the Quislings asked if the German authorities would be kind enough to tell them something about the future of Belgium and their share in it, the Germans were too busy to answer. Such is the first punishment of Quislings—that even those they want to serve despise them.

The Norwegian people are not held responsible for Quisling and his followers. Does anyone really hold the French people responsible for Laval? How then could the Flemish people be held responsible for the one per cent of Nationalists who try to collaborate with Hitler? At this moment only the voice of those who seem to compromise the Flemish people is heard, but what do we hear when we listen closely to the rumble of 4,500,000 silent Flemings suffering under the German yoke for the second time in 25 years. They speak through deeds, not words.

What do the Quislings say? Do they claim to represent the Flemish people—the people that gave Van Eyck, van der Goes, Rubens, Van Dyck, Bruegel to the world, that sent Father Damien to Molokai and Father de Smet of Dendermonde to pacify the American Indians—the Flemish people who fought against counts, dukes and sovereigns, city against city, hamlet against township, for liberty and independence, for democracy in its most local form? The Quislings would not dare to make such a claim! They confess at length their disillusionment, their rancor at being a despised and scoffed-at minority. They complain every day that they are misunderstood and attacked, even by their former friends. The Flemish people have created a vacuum around these spiritual lepers.

Literary life was always very active in Flanders. Not more than three prominent writers, contaminated with Nazi ideas before the invasion, who had been lionized and published in Germany, joined the New Order. The others have remained silent and express their disgust with a splendid dignity. The Nazi Mayor of Brussels visits the Flemish Club and complains that its former members are absent. A third-rate critic harangues the Flemish poets who have refused to celebrate the New Order: "They don't understand what is expected of them." A Nazi poet tries five publishers, and none of them is interested in his manuscript. A Quisling alderman wants to flatter the founders of *Van Nu en Straks* a review of literary revival founded fifty years ago. He organizes a solemn commemoration, and not one of those who formerly took part in the literary event shows up.

But what happens on the positive side? About 50 Flemish underground newspapers spring up from Flanders.

Week by week they expose the Quislings among their people. The bodies of Nationalist chieftains are found in the canals, Nationalist Party headquarters are bombed even in the small provincial towns. The first we hear about that mighty group of saboteurs, the White Brigade, is when the Nazi courts put 12 Flemish boys on trial in the Flemish stronghold of Ghent. These are the simple, honest folk of Flanders, a workman, a pharmacist, a student, a radio dealer, a mechanic, a dental technician, a café owner. They were called Van Cauwenberghe, Desmet, Van Laere, Pissens, Impens, Eyckens, De Greef, Vanderhaeghen and Van Acker. Their names are as good Dutch names as Roosevelt or Van Buren.

In the course of history, the Flemish people have borne many an injustice. They have always done so with dignity, and their protests have been moderate and sensible. If a few traitors succeed for a moment in creating a smokescreen of Nazism over the fair fields of Flanders, it is due mainly to the many falsehoods told outside Belgium concerning the language problem in Belgium.

But should anyone dare to brand the Flemish people as a Nazi-inclined group, the dead of the White Brigade will stare at him from their heroic graves. And who could sustain the accusing eyes of these obscure men who have offered their young lives that liberty and democracy may bloom once again "in Flanders Fields?"

2.—*The Very Best of the Lot*

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE MIDDLE AGES, A BELGIAN peasant set out from his village for the fair at nearby Ciney. There he stole a cow, which he took to another town. The owner of the animal followed him and was fortunate enough to meet his feudal lord, to whom he complained about the robbery. This mighty and righteous man told the thief that if he returned the cow, he would be forgiven. The peasant obeyed, but no sooner had he set foot on the territory of Ciney than he was arrested and hanged.

The feudal lord, to whom the peasant had paid allegiance, took this unfair procedure as a personal offense and immediately attacked Ciney in force. At once the people of Huy, the Duke of Brabant, the counts of Flanders, Namur and Luxemburg joined the fight. The War of the Cow of Ciney was waged for three years, during which 20,000 people were killed, and the Ardennes country was completely devastated. The cow, described by the poet as "the one end moo, the other milk," lived happily ever after.

Such were the Walloons of old—fighters who believed so strongly in fighting that apparently the reason or excuse for the conflict mattered little to them. They were the

descendants, or at least the heirs, of some of the oldest Europeans—sturdy, swarthy cavern men, who had lived for ages in the rocky hills of prehistoric Belgium, fighting ferocious beasts and, in the long, dark hours of winter or of the night, drawing on the walls of their grottos somber pictures of the terrifying animals they had to combat.

When the feudal period, with its endless succession of savage vengeance, banditry, mass executions, razing of towns and ruthless deportations, was over, the Walloons found an outlet for their fighting spirit in the most dangerous of industries—mining and professional soldiery. A great number of them put themselves at the disposal of the *condottieri* who, for two centuries, played such an important rôle in European politics. They were mercenary soldiers and excellent ones at that. Highest praise was bestowed on them by the German poet Schiller in his tragedy *Wallenstein.* Reviewing the international character of the troops at the camp of that great adventurer Wallenstein, he says of the Walloons:

"They are the very best of the lot."

But they not only fought loyally and bravely for foreign princes; having served in the French Army during the Revolution and the Napoleonic Empire, they also made a decisive contribution to the liberation and independence of their own country in 1830.

It would be tempting, if all too easy, to establish a deterministic parallel between the aspects of the Walloon countryside and the character and history of its inhabitants. Up to recent times, most of the southern part of Belgium was covered with a dense forest which even Caesar's legions found hard to penetrate, and in which they met

many minor defeats. The Romans settled, for the most part, on the edges of the immense woods; for centuries the Coal Forest was only meagerly inhabited and little known.

During the prehistoric cataclysm, half a dozen rivers and streams carved their way through the Ardennes forest and the rest of the Walloon country. Breaking the monotony of the endless forest, the rocky surface gave way, in many places, to narrow valleys bordered by steep cliffs, but always hemmed in by the woods. Everywhere water was the essential factor in the settlement of the land. It gave Walloonia its beauty and greatness. It flowed in state through the channels of the mighty Meuse; it rushed playfully along the winding banks of the Lesse, the Amblève and the Semois; it cascaded and chattered in a thousand waterfalls through the thickness of the forest; it rumbled through impenetrable caverns and reverberated deep within the Grottos of Han—vaster than the Kentucky caves; it lay, leaden and ominous, in great, silent, underground lakes, echoing only the piercing screeches of the bats.

The water must have taught the people to sing. The oldest known French poem, the canticle to St. Eulalia, was chanted somewhere in the Walloon country in the 11th century: *"Buona pulcella fu Eulalia."* Here the charming legend of Aucassin and Nicolette originated, and some of the first passion plays were written in this land. In the highly-refined 18th century, the height of graceful writing and elegant philosophizing was reached by the Prince de Ligne, a native of the Walloon city of Tournay. Later, the Walloons gave Grétry and César Franck to the world, and, being a versatile people, they also contributed,

through Adolphe Sax of Dinant, the saxophone to the musical world.

They became excellent gunsmiths; they made copper hammering a fine art; they went down into the coal beds of their hills and exploited the most dangerous and treacherous mines of Europe with a stubborn courage. Part of the forest gave way to industry. Charleroi became a miniature, although a drabber, Pittsburgh. Hundreds of villages were transformed into ugly mining towns, their blue slate roofs continually buried under the heavy coal dust. But, in the midst of the relentless progress of heavy industry, most of the Ardennes forest remained intact. It became the pleasure resort of Belgium and Holland, the trout-fisher's paradise, the timber reserve of the nation.

In World War I, the Walloon country suffered the brunt of the German attack in 1914. Liége put up a proverbially known resistance, and hundreds of civilians in Dinant and elsewhere were murdered by the Germans. Then the long-drawn-out battle rolled on to destroy Flanders. But during the four years of occupation, the Germans did not remain idle. Not only did they take their share (the lion's share, needless to say) of the industrial and mining output of the country, but they inaugurated an extensive program of deforestation. They reduced the timber reserve of the Walloon country to an enormous extent; the value of the wood they stole amounted to 200,000,000 gold francs.

In his excellent and illuminating book *Nazis in the Woodpile,* Egon Glesinger has proved beyond a doubt that several years before the outbreak of the war, the Germans had perfected a scheme for acquiring that essential raw material, wood.

When they invaded Belgium, they were in possession of a well-prepared plan of exploitation of the country's wood reserves. They started their campaign by prohibiting the importation of Norwegian and Finnish timber. Even in East Flanders where timber was scarce, they requisitioned all trees of more than one yard in circumference for the manufacture of wooden shoes, thus dooming part of that province to complete deforestation.

In the Walloon country, they were so ruthless in their policy of plundering that, by 1941, they had endangered the mining industry by creating a shortage of wood for pit props. Cave-ins became so numerous that the Germans were compelled to use steel girders in the mines.

In several places the civilian population was drafted to cut the wood, in order to provide pit props; elsewhere Czech and Polish slave-laborers who were familiar with forestry, were taken from the mines to work in the woods. The Germans also used the forests as a storage place for their ammunition.

Belgian patriots who knew about this and found out how much the Germans needed wood, started a scorched-earth policy with remarkable results. They, themselves, set the woods on fire. According to German publications, the number of forest fires in Belgium rose from 160 in 1939 to 404 in 1941.

When the Germans tried to enforce the regulations of the Agricultural Corporation they had organized, they met with stubborn resistance in Walloon villages. The Corporation, which wanted to redistribute cattle (which meant essentially taking the livestock away from farmers), had to organize military expeditions against the obstinate peasants of the Ardennes region. Many a dramatic inci-

dent occurred, and in several cases there were more armed men, controllers and Quisling officials checking up on the livestock of certain villages than there were inhabitants.

Since the Germans introduced forced labor for everybody between 18 and 60 in Belgium, a great number of younger people have taken to the woods. Although there is not much information about the proportion of these evasions, it is believed that thousands are hiding in the deep Ardennes forests. Those boys are inspired by what happened in the Walloon cities; the stubborn resistance of patriots in Liége succeeded in driving the Nazi-appointed mayor completely out of his mind. They killed the Nazi-appointed mayors of Verviers, Charleroi and many other places.

These young men know that there is no reconciliation possible between the murderers of Dinant and Visé, and the decent people of Belgium. The fact that the Ardennes woods have become the fortress and hiding place of thousands of Belgians was clearly revealed by the Germans themselves. After these patriotic outlaws had succeeded a number of times in raiding German property and retiring to the safety of their hide-out, the Germans announced that they would not search the woods with soldiers and Gestapo any more, but would use machine guns to force the Belgians out of their hiding places. In one instance, they used 60 machine-guns and peppered a section of the woods during a whole night, without success. Later on, the Nazis who have always claimed that peace and order reign in the southern as well as in the northern part of Belgium, were compelled to announce that in several places in the Ardennes they have had to use artillery against civilians hiding in the forests.

One night in 1468, 600 men from Franchimont tried to kidnap their duke and the King of France at Liége. They were discovered, but they fought against 40,000 enemies and died to the last man. The Germans who have little humor but much historical information may well remember that this story inspires every Belgian school child. When they fire their cannons in the rustling woods of the Ardennes, they will knock down some oaks and elms, some chestnuts and some pines. They may even kill a few young men who have not found safety in the limestone caves or in the deep and humid fastnesses of the forest, but how can they hope to destroy the spirit of a people to whom their own poet paid tribute in this line:

"Respect him for he is a Walloon."

3.—*Undisciplined Belgians*

TIME AND AGAIN MR. GOEBBELS HAS TOLD THE WORLD that the German nation has produced more and better artists and philosophers than all the rest of the world put together. Nobody denies the artistic and scientific achievements of Germany in the past, and therefore Mr. Goebbels appears to be shadowboxing. His aim, however, is to divert attention from the fact that Nazi Germany has created an atmosphere in which art has become sterile and

philosophy has been reduced to complete and ignoble servitude. Nazis are not supposed to think, and artists are encouraged only if they interpret nature according to the concepts of Mr. Hitler of the celebrated Braunau school of painting.

But you can't put a German philosopher completely out of business. In one way or another he will try to generalize, to discover concepts, rules and laws where most people see nothing but a mass of unrelated facts. He has even found a justification for Nazism.

The German tendency toward this type of discovery is well illustrated in the famous joke about the three scholars. An Englishman, a Frenchman and a German were asked to write a book about the elephant. After a year the Englishman presented an elaborate volume entitled *"The Elephant. How to Hunt and Domesticate Him."* The Frenchman had written a witty and delicate treatise on *L'Eléphant et l'Amour.* But after five years the German had still under press three volumes entitled: *Die Geschichte und Philosophie des Elephanten von den frühesten Zeiten bis zur Gegenwart.* The history and philosophy of the elephant from antiquity up to the present day.

As studious a person, as thorough-going a German has been active for some time now on the *Brüsseler Zeitung,* the German newspaper published in Brussels for the benefit of the Nazi administration and its troops. This author recently devoted his philosophical inquiries to the black market. Like Faustus he wants to discover the hidden reasons behind events and facts. He is not so much interested in how things are as in their why and wherefore —the true philosophical attitude, of course.

First of all the philosopher wants to find out why such

a thing as the black market exists at all. From his standpoint it is an anomaly; there is no real need for it. His compatriots, the German authorities of occupation, have provided for everything in Belgium. They made a survey of all existing food, and then decided how much everyone should eat, on a basis of perfect equality and justice. Nobody will starve. Such, at least, is the theory. However things look different in fact, and food distribution on an equal basis begins only when the best morsels have been shipped to the Reich. The philosopher overlooks this, because it doesn't fit in with his theory, but the German military administrator of Belgium comes to his rescue.

After three years of experience, Mr. Reeder, the military administrator of Belgium, who has observed the Belgians very carefully and who is decidedly fed up with them, said in a speech: "*The Belgians refuse to submit to discipline and always try to evade the law. In Germany everybody submits to discipline, even when the people do not like it.*" The Belgians will always be grateful to Mr. Reeder for this splendid contribution to the study of their particular psychology.

The *Brüsseler Zeitung* goes deeper into the problem. "Whoever would try to deny the existence of the black market throughout Belgium would only be laughed at. The black market, in its broadest economic and moral sense, is as characteristic of Belgian life as the fishermen along the canals."

Examining the reasons for this situation, the writer comes to the following conclusion. "Two factors have a regrettable influence upon the black market—the vitality of the inhabitants and the absence of governmental apparatus. The gossips even pretend that the only thing that

really seems to work perfectly in the life of the Belgian community is the black market."

Notwithstanding the crushing burden of three years of occupation and terror, the Belgians have kept their vitality. They should be crestfallen and humiliated, they should long ago have thrown in the sponge. The disciplined Germans would have done so, but, after all the hardships and horrors the Belgians have gone through during three years, the major complaint of the Germans against these stubborn people is that their vitality is too great.

The next reproach is of a more political nature—the lack of government, even a puppet government. From May 18, 1940, on, the Germans have hoped to find well-known Belgians to run the country for them, quisling-fashion. They found a few minor traitors who were ready to take on the job, but after looking them over they decided to overlook them. They were small fry, and no one could expect them to have any influence or authority over their countrymen. For three years now the two diminutive quisling parties have been wailing in their publications: "When will we attain power? We alone are able to put things right. Why do the Germans not hand over authority to us?" The Nazis do not answer, or if they do, they evade the issue and say that everything will come out all right after the war.

The *Brüsseler Zeitung* then goes into a detailed study of the functioning of the black market. One remark proves that Belgian poultry live up to Nazi expectations better than Belgian citizens. "After a very slow winter, the hens started to lay again sooner than usual. They contribute their share to the general war effort and even the shortage of chicken feed cannot entirely quench their zeal." It takes

a real philosopher to ferret out the noble collaborationist motives of the Belgian hens.

The black market seems to be very unstable. Prices depend entirely upon the outcome of the German campaigns. "As soon as our enemies achieve a little success, prices go down, for people say, 'In a month the English will be here. They will bring along all kinds of supplies and the black marketeers will be ruined if they don't sell out in time.' This reaction, like every stock exchange reaction, is based on experience and especially on that of 1918."

One might suppose that a philosopher would have great respect for experience. On the contrary, 1918 proves nothing to him. He accuses the Belgians of "narrow-mindedness and lack of understanding of the 1943 situation." Only a very few people understand, says the *Brüsseler Zeitung,* that a defeat of Germany would not bring the British into Belgium, but the Russians. Therefore, Germany's reverses should logically result in a bull market.

This "stupidity" of the Belgians, however, is not harmful. The *Zeitung* says it even enjoys knowing that the Belgians make use of the black market. It proves that their conception of world economics is even more superficial than their conception of economic liberalism. These people care only for one thing—to eat today. "They remind one of the lamb which, on its way to slaughter, stops to nibble a few blades of grass in consolation."

All of which goes to prove that the Belgians are a stupid people. The reason for their stupidity is to be found in their government and in their traditions. Belgium has always been a liberal country, and liberalism develops individualism. That is wrong, says the *Brüsseler Zeitung,* because individualists object to rules and regulations. They

want to live as they please, and "they become masters in the art of dodging the law." The war has made all this clear to the *Brüsseler Zeitung,* which sheds crocodile tears when it thinks how much the Belgians, delivered from their liberalism and individualistic tendencies, might contribute to a new Europe.

It is a long way from those understanding hens who patriotically lay more eggs when necessary, to these philosophical conclusions about the character of the Belgian people, but the author is to be congratulated for having discovered that a people used to freedom cannot be induced to say that slavery is a good thing.

4.—Revenge or Justice

MOST FOREIGN VISITORS WHO HAVE DEVOTED THEIR attention to the psychology of Belgium have been impressed with the natural moderation of the inhabitants. During the Renaissance, authors explained this characteristic as a result of the climatic conditions, which are damp and rainy. According to their reasoning the fact that the sun is so often on leave and that people are compelled by nature to stay in their houses much of the time, exposes them less to the temptation of ardent dispute of political matters in the Forum and makes them more interested in their homes and in their comfort.

Explaining people's behavior on the sole basis of their physical surroundings is of course hazardous and extremely unscientific but, in this particular case, geography does seem to give a clue.

For centuries Belgium has been located between powerful neighbors without any desire on its side to be absorbed either to the left or to the right. It has suffered a great deal on account of its location; it was periodically transformed into Europe's battleground. It has also profited somewhat by its geographical position, but only in those short intervals of peace when international economic barriers did not choke it. It has never suffered from megalomania; even when Leopold II wanted to endow it with a colonial territory 80 times its own size, it lacked the vision to accept this gift immediately and with gratitude. The cautious Belgians had to be convinced. For centuries their main preoccupation had been to safeguard their personality, to keep what was their own. Adventure, even a profitable one, did not have a spontaneous appeal for them.

Political passions in Belgium were powerful but in the main rather verbal. For a neutral observer, election time was a wonderful period, especially in the smaller communities. There, the issues were seldom ideological. In hundreds of villages there were no political parties; practically everybody was either Catholic or Socialist and no political issue was raised. But Jones wanted to be mayor and Smith's wife did not see any reason why her husband should not run the town. The result of these cogitations was a very colorful campaign in which the bystanders were greatly amused by the frank and often indiscreet criticisms of the candidates' private affairs. Of

course, in national matters and in the bigger communities the situation seemed entirely different. The conflict between parties had little to do with the personality of the candidates and as a rule, before the influence of Fascism and Nazism made itself felt, the debate was on a rather *decent* level. It was sometimes harsh in its terms but it never led to physical violence. As far as the Belgians are able to remember, never in the history of the country has a politician been attacked because of his opinion; never was anybody killed for disagreeing with somebody else on matters of internal and external policies. In times of political crises, those who cared to study Belgium's history or who knew the country's psychology well, were always confident that some compromise solution would be found to solve even the acutest problem. The Belgians were considered an essentially "reasonable" people who never went to extremes in their opinion and who understood that to a certain extent politics is a game *(le jeu de la politique,* say the French without any malice), a game in which one should be, above all, a good loser.

When Belgian Fascism was born, a mongrel product, its "leader" Léon Degrelle tried to introduce in Belgian politics the methods used by his masters. Exploiting a latent discontent among the middle classes, he succeeded in gaining 22 seats in Parliament at one time, but in the next election, when people had come to see that Rexism used exactly the same vile technique Hitler and Mussolini had employed, there were only four of his men left in the House. The Belgians could permit a candidate to be called an imbecile, but they refused to let a nasty charlatan treat his opponents as thieves, knaves or gangsters. They gave a sound spanking to a man who so evidently lacked

the national virtue of moderation and who proved so dishonest.

Since the Nazis occupied Belgium, a new era has opened in Belgian politics: the era of violence. In the last two years, a great number of collaborationists have been killed by Belgian patriots. Proportionally more traitors than German soldiers were liquidated in that way. What explains this change in Belgian political habits? What justifies this departure from a traditional attitude of moderation and conciliation?

The people in Belgium and in the other occupied countries would have a good if sarcastic laugh if they could read the solemn articles of plain-living and deep-thinking moralists who tell the Allied Nations, please, not to hate their enemies! Hatred is such a bad thing, they say. But so is the very useful castor oil and so also is the dentist's drill. The Belgians prove that they hate their enemies, the Germans, and above all those few among themselves who collaborate with the Germans.

What exactly is a collaborator? There are, of course, many, many shades of collaborationism. There is the short-sighted capitalist who loves "order" and who still believes that Hitler is a useful fellow to keep away those horrible Bolsheviks who object to bonds and stocks. There is the third-rate journalist who has been put in charge of a Nazi-controlled newspaper, and who tells his masters that So-and-So is a dangerous man of whom the Germans should take care, who attacks his former colleagues and tells the Germans to oust them from a miserable job given them so they could keep alive. He is the man who publishes articles telling the Germans that many of the students at the Belgian Universities are just trying to escape

compulsory labor, that they should be thoroughly examined and shipped to German factories. He is the man who on one pretext or another tries to induce the Germans (only too willing to do so) to take care of his former enemies. A man who for two years has been denouncing his own countrymen for money, a man who has told his masters that So-and-So has bought a loaf of bread on the black market, that his son has distributed patriotic newspapers of the underground press and that his daughter sings the National Anthem in school. That is a collaborator.

There is another kind too: the young nitwit and bully who saw his chance when the Quislings offered him a uniform in what they call the "Black Brigade" and gave him authority to help his masters. He has a black uniform now and a stick; he is allowed to check on those townspeople who come home from the country with a pound of butter or with a few carrots painstakingly hidden in their luggage. He controls these "criminals" who don't live up to the food regulations and denounces them to his masters who confiscate half the country's food supply. He was invited to see an anti-Jewish film and when he left the theater he went to every Jewish shop he could find in town, to smash it up and to molest its owners. He gave a helping hand to the Germans when at 4 o'clock in the morning they surrounded the local Ghetto, dragging people of 82 years of age, small children, invalids, out of their beds, in order to ship them to Poland and to death. He is a complete heel and he enjoys it, for people fear him and some weaklings even court his friendship or favor. Many people have been sent to jail on his account. Some of them were later liberated and died. When he and

his companions in their black uniforms heard of the attack on Dieppe, the whole outlook of the war suddenly seemed to have changed. He went into hiding, as reliable witnesses can testify, begging for civilian clothes so that the Allies would not recognize his livery. Please, do not hate these men, gentle Allies, hate is such bad taste.

The peoples of the occupied countries know what collaborators are. They treat them as they deserve, in the only manner the circumstances make possible.

What precedes will serve as a tentative funeral eulogy of one W. Hauben of Antwerp who nearly died on December 6, 1942. The Antwerp Nazi-controlled newspaper *Volk en Staat* of December 7, contains the following item:

"Last night, W. Hauben, a member of the factory guard and a member of the Black Brigade, was having dinner at his home and was suddenly attacked by his own father who assailed him with a hatchet. This idealistic boy was seriously wounded but we hear that his life is not in danger."

It is easy to imagine the humble household of the working man to which this boy returned having fulfilled his day's duties as servant of the Nazis, as enemy of his own people. His father may have been a soldier of the last war. Certainly he was old enough to have seen what the Germans did to Belgium in 1914–1918. Sitting in the only heated room of his apartment, looking at the meager meal this young fool was enjoying, the sight of the uniform his son was wearing—black as the job it stands for—must have made his cup of bitterness overflow.

Things have gone a long way when a father tries to kill his own child on account of his political attitude. Nobody can feel very happy on reading such a news item

but it had this good result: to force the Germans to admit the abysmal depth that separates patriots from traitors.

A few days later, on December 22, the German radio broadcast to its listeners in Norway that a Walloon priest who was in favor of collaboration had been killed in Brussels. Never before in the history of Belgium have priests been insulted or attacked by their countrymen. Thus in the same fortnight both ethnical groups which form the Belgian nation gave proof of their feelings. These suffering people know that every crime deserves punishment. It is foolishness and culpable weakness to plead that the enormous mass of crimes committed by Nazism and Fascism everywhere should be forgotten and dismissed as an ugly memory. The survivors of the victims do not demand revenge; they stand on justice.

If the father of a young man who betrays his country feels that the only way out is to kill his own child, if Belgians who always respected and loved their clergy, decide to kill a priest, departing from their natural moderation, it is not for us, safe on this side of the Atlantic, to say: "What brutal people!" It is for us to take notice that a liberated Europe will never admit compromise with crime or convenient arrangements with the servants of an obscene and hateful regime.

5.—"Spiritually We Are Semites"

ONCE UPON A TIME, A ROAD COMPANY WAS PERFORMING *The Merchant of Venice.* At the crucial moment of the play, when Shylock finds out he has been outsmarted by the Christians, a man stood up in the audience and shouted indignantly, "It's a scandal! That man is being cheated!"

This interruption must have come from a person with a strong sense of justice, even if he did not appreciate the humor of the situation. At the moment most of the Belgians look at what the Nazis emphatically call "the Jewish problem" in the same way that this anonymous defender of the sacred right of contract did.

It would be exaggerated to say that there has never been any anti-Semitic feeling in Belgium, but it has not existed since the 14th Century. The chronicles of the time tell how in the early part of that century some Jews were killed for reasons inspired by bigotry or by plain rowdiness and how those Jews who survived sat at the borders of the Senne in Brussels chanting elegies for their murdered friends. That was exactly six hundred years ago, and since then nothing of the kind has happened again.

It is true that Philip II drove most of the Jews out of Antwerp around 1560, but those engaged in the diamond trade stayed on and ensured the future greatness of their home country as a diamond-cutting, polishing and trading center.

Thus there was not even any basis for a Jewish question in Belgium. When Hitler came to power, Antwerp became the haven of thousands of Jews, driven from Germany or escaped from Nazi torture camps. It even happened that one day German Jewish parents, in despair, shipped a couple of hundred Jewish children to Belgium in a train, leaving these waifs to the care of their coreligionists. This incident, together with the influx of adult Jewish refugees, prompted the Belgian Government to credit Jewish welfare organizations with six million francs ($200,000) for the care of those who had fled Hitler Germany.

One day in September 1938, Pope Pius XI, that formidable old man, reminded a group of Belgian pilgrims, who had come to pay him homage, of the position of the Church with regard to anti-Semitism. Said the Pope: '*Sacrificium Patriarchae nostri Abramae.*' Mark well that Abraham is called our Patriarch, our ancestor. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the thought and sublime reality expressed in this text. It is an antipathetic movement. We Christians can have nothing to do with it.

"Through Christ and in Christ we are of Abraham's spiritual descent. No! It is impossible for Christians to take part in anti-Semitism. True, we recognize man's right to defend himself, to take whatever measures may be necessary against any menace to his legitimate interests. But anti-Semitism is intolerable. Spiritually we are Semites."

Following the invasion, the Nazis tried to apply to the 65,000 Jews of Belgium the laws and regulations inspired by their moronic racial theory. They met with little success, but having more urgent matters to attend to, they did not press the issue. When resistance became organized in Belgium, they needed a scapegoat and their anti-Semitic actions gradually increased. On June 20, an act of sabotage was committed. In reprisal, 70 Belgians, so-called Communists, 60 war prisoners who had been liberated and 1,000 Jews were deported to Poland, according to the *Brüsseler Zeitung.*

When the Nazis try to starve Jewish children to death by refusing them ration cards, the Belgian Red Cross steps in and feeds them better than the other children. When Jews are compelled to wear the Star of David, school teachers explain to their classes that this mark, designed for infamy, is a token of distinction. Dozens of incidents of that kind happen every day all over Belgium, for the brutes may believe that all evil comes from the members of one race, as savages believe in taboos, but the Belgians, for the last six centuries, have known that the enemy is within us all, and that only those who succeed in subduing their passions belong to a superior race, to a race of decent people. And it is they "who shall inherit the earth."

1.—*The Bitter Draught of Slavery*

In the venerable town hall of Antwerp, as in many other public buildings of medieval times in Belgium, the beams of the ceilings were decorated with quotations from the city laws dating back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century. Every town had its own code, but in many of them, Antwerp included, the first Article read: "In this city every man shall be free and no man a slave." All Town Councils in Belgium have been dismissed by the Germans, and only those pliant Quislings who are allowed to run some towns are able today to read the solemn script which used to be a constant reminder to their predecessors of the spirit of independence that made Belgium great.

Germany has definitely put the clock back, not by several years only, but by centuries. On Assyrian temples we see bas reliefs portraying the thousands of slaves whom the ruthless conquerors of those days abducted from their homeland to work for the Assyrian "Reich." We see them dragging enormous statues of man-headed bulls, curving their backs under the lash of Assyrian foremen. It seems barbaric and unreal, and our children look on these sculptures as relics that morally, as well as prac-

tically, belong to the past. Still, a graphic portrayal of the stories that come out of present-day Belgium would not differ much from that of the countries of the Near East under Assyrian rule.

Students of Hitlerism know that when Hitler is driven to the wall he will behave like a newly-caged tiger. He will spare nothing or nobody. He will behave like the desperado he is. What his henchmen are doing to the Belgians now already gives us an idea of what will happen then.

The rapid industrialization of Belgium in the 19th century was no unmixed blessing. As in other countries, it carried with it those excrescences of modern industrialism and capitalism in their formative stages—ruthless competition and disastrously unhygienic working conditions.

The reaction was quick to come and powerful in its stride. European economists who studied the economic evolution of Belgium and its social consequences considered the country a "terre d'expériences"—a field of economic experiment. But Belgium may claim, and with considerable pride, that her social legislation in the last few decades has been far in advance of the rest of Europe, with the possible exception of Scandinavia. Proof of this lies in the fact that Belgium had no Popular Front, the appearance of which in France, for all its excesses, was a logical reaction against the harsh conservatism of French industry and the backward social conditions of the French working class. The absence of a Belgian Popular Front was all the more remarkable since there existed close contacts and a firm solidarity between Belgian and French labor groups.

It is true that the American working man has had for

many years higher wages and consequently better standards of living, but there is no doubt that as far as working conditions are concerned (child labor, women in industry, factory hygiene, social security, etc.) up to some 15 years ago he was far behind his Belgian colleague.

A good many of the latter's gains were achieved through the patient and intelligent action of Belgian trade unionism. With a population of 8,000,000 people, Belgium had about 1,500,000 industrial workers. The unions claimed 1,000,000 of these, 600,000 belonging to the Socialist unions, 350,000 to the Christian-Democratic (Catholic) unions and 50,000 to unions of other parties.

Less than two months after the German attack on Belgium, the president of the Belgian Socialist Party, Hendrik De Man, published a manifesto to the members of his party, telling them that Nazism was the solution to all their problems, and that they should bury their Socialist ideas. "Do not imagine," he wrote, "that you should resist the occupation authorities. Accept the *fait accompli* of their victory, and try to gain experience from it, so as to make it the basis of new social progress."

Mr. De Man, who had taught for several years in German universities and published a number of books, is undoubtedly a character, although hardly what could be called an ethical one. After his return from Germany in 1934 he joined the Belgian Socialist Party in much the same manner as a pirate boards a ship. For some time the Belgian Socialists were a little bewildered by his paradoxical scholarship and his alarming amorality, but, when this pirate wanted to steer them, ship and crew, to the Nazi haven, they left him flat. Not one of the Socialist

members of Parliament was found to share De Man's ideas.

The Germans put him in charge of organizing the U.T.M.I. (Union of Manual and Intellectual Workers) which, according to the Nazi plan, was to fuse all Belgian workers into one nonpolitical organization.

What the members of the unions thought of the behavior of the secondary leadership which pretended to act on their behalf, was not published. The top officials of the Socialist unions were not included in the reorganization, and those in charge of the Christian-Democratic unions resigned rather than compromise.

The Germans countered this setback by seizing the funds of the old unions, compelling the treasurers to list and relinquish their assets. Those who resisted were imprisoned. The buildings belonging to these union organizations were expropriated.

Now U.T.M.I. membership meetings are attended and controlled by German delegates, but the Nazi press repeatedly complains that "the wait-and-see attitude of the unions paralyzes the working class."

Circulation of Mr. De Man's official union paper *Le Travail* dropped disastrously; he had to discontinue daily publication and be satisfied with a monthly edition.

The employers, on the other hand, have refused to have any dealings with the Nazi union and continue to consult the leaders of the former organizations.

As is to be expected under the German regime, all strikes are illegal. This, however, has not prevented organized resistance on the part of the members of the former unions. In the coal mining districts, for example, the workers have gone on strike several times, and the pro-

duction of coal has diminished by 36 per cent, notwithstanding bonuses and an increase in personnel.

When the Germans tried to bribe the miners into greater production by alloting them better rations than other industrial workers, union representatives as well as employers issued a protest, saying that they refused to enjoy preferential treatment and asking that the total amount of food in Belgium be distributed equally among all Belgians.

Strikes of more than 125,000 workers have been recorded several times. They are due, of course, to the organized action of the illegal unions, which are publishing a number of underground bulletins, encouraging resistance and keeping alive the spirit of their organizations.

Since they have already abolished relief and since unemployment has become a sufficient reason for shipping people to Germany, the Germans have made the 48-hour week obligatory. Every industrial worker, every commercial employee, who on account of this longer work week is put out of a job, is immediately requisitioned. The Brussels Flour Mills wanted to prevent their able-bodied personnel from being sent to Germany and dismissed 65 very old employees. The Germans heard of it, requisitioned 65 young men and had the old men reinstated.

The story is familiar of how the Germans tightened control over Belgian industry by forcing a corporative system upon the industrialists. This system proves very useful now as the following example demonstrates. There were about 400 shoe manufacturers in Belgium before the war. Most of them were located in small rural communities and were run partly on a homework basis, the mechanical part of the process being less important. The

Germans decided that only those factories whose production was more than 2,500 pairs of shoes a month could continue to function. This resulted in the closing down of 300 out of the 400 factories, and, consequently, in the unemployment of thousands of workers. In order to obtain labor and stimulate unemployment artificially, the Germans first clamped down on the luxury industries, on the personnel of dressmakers, department stores, etc. Later on, they proceeded in like manner with the small industries, such as nickel plating. As the results are still unsatisfactory, they are now attacking big firms, usually telling the management how many men they want and on several occasions holding the management responsible for handing over the required quota. As a rule, the managers answer that their employees are not slaves. The Germans then pick out the single men, examine them and sign them up. At the last moment, however, their signature is demanded on a document stating that they are volunteering for service in Germany. There is, however, a catch to it; for if they sign, they get from 66 to 75 pfennigs an hour, but if they refuse, they have to go anyway, but they do not receive any payment at all. The so-called volunteers receive 750 francs for their equipment, but those who refuse to go through the routine receive nothing at all. In the industrial Liége region, between 60 per cent and 80 per cent of the workers under 35 years of age have already been shipped to Germany. All those who were caught for smuggling or who were merely suspected of being involved in black market traffic were shipped away. Eye-witness reports state that in December 1942 from five to fifteen trains left Belgium every day filled with Belgian workers.

Regular raids are organized. Movie-house audiences, for instance, are combed, and every young man found there is transformed immediately into a volunteer. Big cafés, race tracks and other places of entertainment are also watched in the same manner. In Liége alone, 19,480 people were abducted within a few weeks for slave labor in Germany.

The industrial workers of the Cockerill factory became so incensed at this policy that they called a meeting at which 6,000 out of 7,000 workers agreed to call a general strike if any more workers in their factory were requisitioned. They were referred to a Brussels German office where an official told them that deportation in their specific factory would be stopped until February 1. "Between now and that date," said the Hitler official, "anything may happen in Belgium."

The Germans also tried to recruit technical engineers. They needed 120 for the Ruhr region. They promised 300 marks a month, 60 marks for their wives and 30 marks for each child. But, they added, if there were not enough volunteers, they would feel themselves "under the painful obligation" to requisition the number of men needed. They called 178 men to their office, out of which only six gave in.

All this does not make very good reading. It is the same sad experience Belgium went through during World War I. At that time the indignation of the entire free world forced the Germans to renounce their schemes and, after a few months, to send home most of the pitiful slave laborers they had nearly starved to death on a diet of potato peelings while forcing them to labor in mines and factories.

By the end of 1942, about 200,000 Belgian workers, deprived of relief, their ration cards stolen by the Nazis, had gone to Germany. They are employed in the most dangerous areas, and underground sources say that more than 6,000 of them have died as a result of RAF bombings. Nothing will now stop the Germans in their desperate fight for production, and it is probable that the 600,000 Belgian slaves in Germany will have to drink to the last drop the bitter draught of slavery.

The Nazi propaganda has emphatically proclaimed that Belgian workers send millions of dollars back to their families from Germany, but, as in all other instances of Nazi generosity, there is a catch to it; these sums are held up at the Belgo-German Clearing House, and the National Bank of Belgium is forced to make the payments to the workers' families. The Belgian people are practically paying the wages of their countrymen enslaved by Hitler.

It has been said that there is not enough darkness in the world to put out the light of a single candle; how could there be enough Nazi contamination to blot out from the hearts of the million organized Belgian workers the fundamental hope and belief in their own unions and in democracy?

2.—"*A Covenant With Death . . .*"

MARK TWAIN ONCE WROTE A REMARKABLE AND VERY amusing article on "That Awful German Language." He especially objected to the fact that the Germans put the verb "so far from the reader's base of operations."

People who are able to use their language in such a complicated way must have a special mentality which sets them apart from other human beings. To find your way through the maze of a half-page-long German sentence requires a strong sense of order and discipline.

Mr. von Falkenhausen, the German Commander of Belgium, proves Mark Twain's point once more. It has been reported how the Belgian Cardinal filed a protest with the German authorities against obliging miners to work on Sundays. The Cardinal objected that this regulation interferes with the fulfillment of people's duty toward the Church. With soldierly braggadocio, General von Falkenhausen told the Cardinal to go to blazes, but on second thought he felt that the miners might be inclined to attend Mass anyway and let the Germans go where they belonged. So he decided to lure them away from Mass with a series of bribes and bonuses which he enumerated in a special decree.

"I've noticed," said von Falkenhausen, "that most of the miners who live in the cities report for work on Sunday. But the men who live in the country stay at home with their wives and their kids—only 40 per cent of those men punch the time clock. These fellows," he said, "we've decided to spoil a little. If they show up on Sunday and work well, 50 per cent of what they produce that day will be added to the bulk of the population's coal rations." Since the Germans take about 100 per cent of the production of the six other days of the week, this generous offer was not really very dramatic. But General von Falkenhausen, having lived in Belgium for a couple of years now, has learned the ways of the people.

At every festival in Flanders there is always a peddler who sells gold watches at a dime apiece. When people seem incredulous, he tells them, "Look, wise guys, for your lousy dime you not only get the watch, but I'll throw in a couple of diamond cuff buttons, a bracelet for your wife and a silver whistle for one of the kiddies—all that for ten cents! Come on now, who's first?"

Mr. von Falkenhausen followed the same technique. "If those country boys show up," he said, "I am going to give them:

"first, double pay on Sunday;

"second, double food rations;

"third, permission to buy 25 cigarettes;

"and fourth, permission to buy 200 pounds more coal than the official ration allows them."

Of course the third and fourth offers don't sound as nice as the first and second, but after all, everybody knows that you can't expect a real gold watch for your dime.

The French, who know a lot about human character,

especially when it's bad character, say: *Il ne suffit pas que l'on soit heureux; il faut que les autres ne le soient pas.* (It's not enough just to be happy; the other fellow must not be). Von Falkenhausen also knew about that. "Now, those pious Church-goers," he said, "who don't want to work on Sunday will:

"first, have a day's pay deducted from their salary;

"second, not receive the bonus they used to get for uninterrupted work;

"and third, have their special rations cancelled."

All this haggling is more ridiculous than dramatic. It shows, however, how hard up the Germans are for labor and production in Belgium. As a rule they try to put up a front and until recently they claimed that the 600,000 Belgians who work in Germany went there for no other reason than their enthusiasm for the New Order. There comes a time, however, when even the Germans must drop their pretense, when circumstances compel them to show their hand and reveal the real predicament in which they find themselves. On October 8, 1942, the Military Command for Belgium and Northern France proclaimed a new decree conscripting Belgian male labor between 18 and 50 years of age and unmarried women between 21 and 35. Under this new measure any Belgian can be compelled to work not only in Belgium, but in the German Reich as well. The decree says that "the education and physique of those liable for duty will be taken into account, as far as possible, in the work allotted to them." In another paragraph, the decree announces a new "labor pass" system; all Belgians between 18 and 50 must be able to show their cards at any time.

This official introduction of slavery for all able-bodied

Belgians, and even for those who are not in good physical condition, called for some kind of an explanation. The German gazette in Belgium, the *Brüsseler Zeitung*, made the following comments on the new measure:

"Taken from the viewpoint that Germany does not wage this war for herself alone, it is only reasonable that the utilization of labor should proceed along the same lines as in Germany. For this reason Germany could no longer refrain from demanding from Belgian labor compulsory labor service in the Reich territory."

In the great debate on slavery in the United States, W. L. Garrison called this practice "a covenant with death and an agreement with hell." Nazism has resurrected this covenant and renewed this agreement. It will be paid off some day with interest, and nobody should expect the Belgian workers to shed any tears at the spectacle of a punishment which would fit the crime.

3.—*The Trojan Horse in Naziland*

NOBODY COULD REASONABLY CLAIM THAT THE GERmans are entirely devoid of humor, but to be able to stand the antics of Hitler and his friends they certainly must have it in a very reduced dose. Some of the boys they send

out to convert the Belgians to the New European Order even suffer from a complete lack of humor. One of them, speaking over the radio, invited the Belgian farmers to go to the Ukraine to settle in that wonderful country, "the granary of Europe" etc., etc. "Go to the Ukraine," he said, "with your gun in one hand and your spade in the other." Farming can't be very much fun that way, it would seem. Another one of these men put himself on record with the remarkable avowal that out of 600,000 Belgians who were induced or compelled to go to the Reich as laborers and workers, 120,000 had already found a way to leave their jobs and were trying to get home. His listeners must have been rather amazed at this proof that there is decidedly something rotten in the state of Mr. Schickelgruber. Otherwise, how could 120,000 men and women simply run loose in that efficient, perfectly organized dreamland of New-Order-Germany?

The Germans seem to have discovered that the presence of six to eight million foreign workers in their territory at a time when as many German men are outside their frontiers is not a thing to be humorous about. Their bubbling Goebbelses have told them for two years now that the occupied countries have been "delivered from the English yoke and from capitalism" and that the foreign workers came to Germany full of enthusiasm to collaborate in the victory of the Reich. It seems after all that there are some drawbacks. In remarkable unison the German press is warning the people that those "guests" are not to be commended. "First of all," they say, "watch out for the purity of our race for these foreigners are capable of anything." *Das Schwarze Korps,* of August 20, 1942, states the case as follows: "Nobody has to care about the honor of for-

eign female workers. That is their own affair, but the German who would treat a foreign woman with the same consideration as a woman of his own people, would show by so doing that he underestimates his own people, he insults his people and thereby degrades himself. This attitude applies as well to women of conquered countries as to those belonging to countries with which we are still at war. . . ." In other words, and the S.S. boys certainly will not miss the point, treat a German woman as a lady and a foreign woman as a harlot. Who cares?

The Nazis of Ludwigshafen have more serious worries. In their *National Sozialistiche Zeitung* of November 27, 1942, they are told that: "In certain factories friendly intercourse has been established between German girls and foreign workers. This is irreconcilable with the national pride of German women. No relations with foreign workers! For this always ends in a spot on the honor of the German women. A heavy barrier must be put up so that the soldiers in the trenches do not lose their confidence in the home front." As far as we can tell, this text represents the foreigners as extremely dangerous and enterprising Fausts; no sooner do they establish friendly relations with German girls than a new Gretchen case develops!

Not only are the foreigners considered a threat to German morals, they also seem to be a danger for Germany's reputation in Europe. Says *Das Schwarze Korps* of December 3, 1942, "Our frontiers are cracked. Millions of foreigners are not subjected to our moral discipline." That discipline of course demands that everything disagreeable in Germany should be ignored. The foreign workers, who have not been stuffed with Nazi theories,

look around in Germany and when they go home or write to their folks they tell stories. Says *Das Reich* of November 22, 1942, "From six to eight million men are strangers in our midst. They are tremendously active in circulating all kinds of news. It is a long time since we have been just among ourselves, among Germans." *Der Neue Tag* (Prague) of August 14, 1942, is more precise: "Since the workers are entitled to write to their homefolks twice a month, it depends on the German farmers what will be said in these letters about Germany or the Ukraine. Their letters should reassure their families and induce more workers to come to the Reich."

How do these "voluntary" workers behave? The German Radio-Paris of November 25, 1942, gives an interesting clue. A French workman on leave told the listeners: "I have come back from Germany. We were 16 workers in the same outfit; eight of them worked well, as they should have. The other eight, anarchists and Communists most of them, went there with a political aim in mind. They used the black market, they stole ration cards and they talked about sabotage." *Das Schwarze Korps* has the following appreciation to offer of Belgian workmen "at work" in Germany: "At the end of the day the German foreman finds it impossible to figure out how so many men can do so little work. We can consider ourselves fortunate," continues the *Schwarze Korps,* "if the workers simply do their job; that's the most that can be hoped for." The paper goes on to describe the road construction work, carried on under the direction of a German foreman:

"What a sight! The entire crew seems to have come to a tacit agreement to work as little as possible. They seem to have developed a method which on the surface gives

the appearance of great activity, but which is actually only a camouflage to hide their inaction. As soon as the foreman turns his back they straighten up and drop their shovels and picks.

"It is impossible to estimate the hours lost while they blow their noses, scratch their heads or stare at the sky. When a dozen of these fellows lift a steel rail or a piece of timber, it looks like a slow-motion picture."

About the same time the German press was pointing out that accidents, fires and minor disasters in Germany were very often due to foreign workers. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of October 18, 1942, attributed fires in the agricultural sections to the fact that "so many laborers do not understand farming expressions in Germany," which certainly is a strange and poor explanation. A Nazi newspaper in Holland was much franker about it: in an industrial town in Bavaria the Dutch farmhands "are the terror of the town. They are smugglers and ruffians. Out of a total of 100 not more than 30 are fit for the job." Elsewhere complaints are filed against similar poor behavior of Belgian workers. "When they have a chance to go back to Belgium," says a Nazi organ, "hundreds of them wait in the stations. As soon as the train arrives, even before the passengers have left it, they rush into the train and the ensuing struggle lasts about 15 minutes. Once they are on the train, they tell stories and swear and shout. The Germans do not understand Flemish, so they can say anything they like. Such behavior is regrettable." Gauleiter Hanke was probably thinking of these foreign boys when he pitied the German women. "Often they are alone on the farm and they are compelled to cooperate

with foreign workers!" In the forestry business things are decidedly unsanitary: the German and the Polish laborers are inclined to cut the throats of their German bosses. A Nazi controlled Belgian newspaper, *Le Soir,* November 27, 1942, reveals that many workers have been lured or abducted to Germany not through official agencies, but through "private recruiters, real slave traders who try to escape official control." The paper attributes discontent among the workers in Germany to "unfulfilled contracts," while another reason for dissatisfaction is "real injustices committed by certain employers or heads of enterprises." All of this goes to show that free lance recruiting of labor has created, in the occupied countries as well as in Germany proper, conditions which are bound to lead to chaos.

We sometimes complain about the way democracy works or does not work, especially when Big Shot A says black and Big Shot B says white. Be consoled by the spectacle of Nazi chiefs, streamlined to the orders of the leader, disciplined and goosestepping as well as they can. Says *Der Angriff,* October 10, 1942: "The many millions of foreign workers who now reside in Germany do not constitute an ideological danger, even if among them there are a few Marxists who intentionally came here with evil purposes. The microbe is only contaminating when it reaches receptive ground. The German worker is completely immune. If anybody gets infected it will be the foreign workers who will become convinced National Socialists." But the *Neues Wiener Tageblatt* of September 29, 1942, felt that "the manpower mobilization from the East is a positive danger from the political and social standpoint." And on November 19, 1942, the labor leader

for the Reich, Sauckel, declared that, "the great number of foreign workers in Germany and their contacts with German workers, undoubtedly constitute a danger."

In a few months the problem has grown considerably. In the beginning the German leaders were concerned that a pure Aryan of German blood might have an affair with a foreign girl. The *Hamburger Fremdenblatt,* of September 13, 1942, wails about "the German blood that would go to waste." Then they became troubled with the fear that German girls might fall for the lure of the exotic and commit "Rassenschande" with an alien. But as the Allies' time marches on, the Germans have discovered that their guests are not exactly friends, that on the contrary, they are watching, hawk-eyed, for the first sign of weakness in the German armor.

The Belgian radio in London tells the thousands of Belgian workers who have been forced to go to Germany to keep quiet, to put on a mask of indifference, to hide their feelings, to wait for the day when the signal will be given. Then 600,000 Belgians, together with millions of oppressed and deported workers of all Europe, will come out of the flanks of the Trojan horse. If the Germans remember the Iliad, they will know what Ulysses and his companions did to the great city of Troy. The six or eight million workers enslaved by Hitler will do at least as good a job as the Homeric heroes. On that we can count.

1.—*The Perfect Nazi Farmer*

THE TOTALITARIAN STATES CLAIM TO HAVE A SOLUTION for every economic problem. Since the main problem in modern society is temporary or permanent unemployment, one of their most spectacular achievements—the first and generally the only one—consists in putting the unemployed to work.

Armament industries multiply and develop tremendously, the entire nation girds itself for war, and pretty soon all skilled labor is reinstated in the industrial machine.

But unemployment is not restricted to industrial workers. It affects a great many people who have no special ability or trade. These men are most dangerous because they comprise the semi-intellectuals who talk a great deal, and who are potential critics of the new régime. The ideal solution to this problem is to put these men in uniform and bestow on them a fraction of the general authority. They make perfect inspectors, controllers and double-checkers of the Fascist organization. Their value is mainly in their numbers, since their presence everywhere is supposed to impress upon the people the vastness and power of the new state.

Grand Central and Pennsylvania trains leave and arrive

on time without any aid from the army and without a military guard on every track. But in Fascist Italy every station had an impressive uniformed detachment, soldiers and party militia were on duty in every train, and you couldn't reach even the most God-forsaken Italian tank town without seeing heavily beplumed *bersaglieri* marching up and down the platform. One had the feeling that if the train were more than two minutes late, a firing squad would be waiting for the engineer to wipe his shame from the face of the Fascist state.

In Belgium, the Nazis forced the skilled workers into Germany by starving their families. They then turned to the problem of the unskilled laborer, who is to be found mostly in rural districts. Since the city people are so starved that they flood the countryside, stealing anything edible they can get hold of, rural guards are needed to keep watch over agricultural production. This rural guard is made up of a great number of otherwise unemployable persons.

Furthermore, a survey of agricultural production is made and a minimum set for every farmer. This calls for the appointment of an even greater number of controllers, inspectors and clerical workers to check on each farmer's actual output.

Sometimes there is bitter humor in the slip-ups of this vast machine. For instance, notwithstanding all their precautions, the Nazis recently discovered that Belgian pigs had a tendency to die suddenly or to disappear. It was therefore ordered that pigs could be slaughtered only by specially appointed veterinarians, accompanied by special pig-controllers. Later it was decided that every pig should have an identification card. Thus, under Nazi rule, every

pig became an individual; he is no longer just any pig, but pig So-and-So, a distinction which even Mr. Disney's three famous little porkers never attained.

Just try to figure out what the population of the average agricultural town in Belgium looks like today. It has its food-rationers, its rural guards, its collectors of farm produce, its cattle-controllers, its pig inspectors, its veterinarians, its administrative assistants to the veterinarians, and so on. Add to these the political spies and informers, the stooges who keep an eye on the local priests and schoolteachers to see that they don't teach the children that the Germans are invaders. You can see that there is little room left for the farmer, who in a normal rural community is, after all, the most important element.

It seems that one of these farmers got to thinking; after doing everything the Nazi administration wanted him to do, he began to wonder what his reward would be, either on earth or in Heaven. So he wrote the following letter to the Nazi-controlled farm journal, *De Koornbloem* [The Cornflower]:

"What happens to a farmer who has not told any lies when stating the amount of land he owns, whose potato crops are correctly estimated, who has handed over everything he should up to the last pound, and who has really done his duty one hundred per cent?"

He received a very disconcerting reply from the editor who represents Nazi thought, and who is well qualified to speak in the name of the New Order:

"Our answer to this farmer is that we are sorry to say that he will, just like the greatest sinner, see a flock of controllers descending upon him, examining him to see what they can still crush out of the already squeezed lemon.

We call it a shame but we can't do anything about it."

This is not the advice of a clandestine patriotic newspaper, but of an authorized organ of the Nazis themselves. We presume that, after reading the answer of *De Koornbloem* of January 5, this model Nazi farmer began to take an interest in the secret food market. If he didn't, he must have been just a plain dope.

2.—*"A Little Lawsuit Stimulates the Blood"*

OF COURSE YOU NEVER HEARD OF LOUVEIGNÉ IN THE province of Liége. It's only a little village, priding itself on a few small foundries, although its inhabitants are mostly farmers.

The peasants of Walloonia are a special race. They have a saying that tells a lot about their psychology. When they reach middle-age they need some kind of a stimulant to keep their interest in life. So they feel that: *"Un petit procès, cela fouette le sang."* "A little lawsuit, from time to time, stimulates the blood." They are not afraid of the courts; on the contrary they find that a good legal quarrel —often about a trivial matter—whips up the circulation. It's good, sound fun. In February 1942 they really had

their day; not one lawsuit, but 121 of them, all in the same village of Louveigné. And it came about like this:

The Nazis, in their desire to control everything and in their need for farm products, created a National Corporation for Agriculture. Every peasant had to join this organization under penalty of losing his land. To make him feel how important his union was, he was charged a yearly fee. He never asked to be unionized, and he certainly did not want to pay out of his own pocket to have a flock of controllers and double-checkers—who were often double-crossers—descend on his fields. All these reasons seemed rather convincing to him and so it happened that 121 farmers flatly refused to pay the 1942 fee to the so-called National Corporation. The Corporation sent out 121 summonses, duly notarized, but the 121 farmers took their case to a lawyer.

This lawyer was not the one they used for their disputes over a party wall, or damage done by a stray pig to a chicken coop. No, they picked out a very distinguished man, one-time Minister of Colonies, Mr. P. Tschoffen, who enjoyed great prestige at the bar. The case was called before the Louveigné Justice of the Peace. His Honor was rather perturbed when the discussion started. His Solomonic wisdom was not up to the profundities of the case the two lawyers were pleading. Actually he had to judge between the country and the invader. His decision was to make history. For Mr. Tschoffen stated his case as follows: "We refuse to pay a fee to an institution which was not created according to Belgian law. It was organized by the Secretary General of the Ministry who obeyed a German order. The occupant has the right and even the duty to maintain order in the country under his

command, but he must leave the laws of the country intact. Organizing a compulsory union is contrary to our Constitution. Measures like that are considered null and void by the legal authority of the land." "Where is that legal authority?" somebody questioned. It appeared to be the Belgian Government in exile in London.

"All the 121 farmers were there," a Nazi newspaper notes. "Of course, they brought along their wives, their children and their friends. It was really a celebration for the peasantry of the region." How they must have chuckled when, in spite of the presence of German agents who were undoubtedly noting down every word of the debate, the legal authority of the exiled government was asserted and proclaimed. For actually they wouldn't have minded paying the small $3 fee, but they wanted to show the invader and his friends that they did not believe in him, that they considered his laws and regulations illegal and worthless. They really had something there for, as the debate developed, it became clear that if the Justice of the Peace decided that the fee of the Corporation was illegal, then the whole system of crop control in Belgium might be upset, and farmers everywhere would imitate their confrères from Louveigné.

Instead of a sentence the Fascist-Nazi newspaper *Le Pays Réel* of February 22 called the Germans to action with the following argument: "Mr. Tschoffen claims that the Belgian Government in London rejects the farmers' union as illegal. How does he know? Communications with England are interrupted. There is only one explanation—he has heard this news over the B.B.C. radio. Listening to that radio is illegal; therefore why is Mr. Tschoffen still at liberty?"

The Nazis immediately threw into jail this man who, in court, used the words "fatherland," "duty," "honor," in the sense they have had for ages.[1] But the 121 peasants from Louveigné had the chance to demonstrate to themselves and to their much-amused neighbors that there can be only one law in Belgium, not the Nazi jungle law of might over right, but one on which the people freely agree.

3.—9,000 *Obstinate Farmers*

IN *As You Like It* SHAKESPEARE LAYS ONE OF THE scenes of the play in "the forest of Arden." Although British scholars have abundantly proved that by Arden Shakespeare meant a place in North Warwickshire in England, the inhabitants of the Ardennes region in southern Belgium steadfastly claim that Shakespeare was talking about their wooded hills which still cover most of the Luxemburg province. This obstinacy is one manifestation of the character which tradition, with some reason, attributes to the Ardennais.

There are about 223,500 of them, mostly farmers and foresters. A few are engaged in the hotel business, since the Ardennes is a tourist region. Those who resign them-

[1] Mr. P. Tschoffen eventually escaped to London where he is now counselor to the Belgian Government.

selves to leaving their beautiful forests become career soldiers, others make efficient, honest, conscientious government officials. As far as pliability of character goes, they are currently compared to that animal which takes a humble stand between the horse and the ass.

Belgians among themselves are apt to complain or to make jokes about this fact in peacetime; in time of war, however, obstinacy is apt to gain the quality of grandeur when applied to national purposes.

We have told the story of the Louveigné trial in which 121 peasants hired the services of a former Cabinet Minister to contest the constitutionality of a tax the Nazis wanted to impose upon them. The outcome was that the Nazis imprisoned the lawyer, and that similar trials which were springing up all over the country were halted by the German Command.

Another story of the same kind reaches us through the candid offices of the Nazi-controlled newspapers *Le Nouveau Journal* and *Le Pays Réel.* In March of 1942 the Nazis decided to take a census of all cattle in Belgium, not, of course, for the sake of publishing a beautiful chart. They were going to "equalize" the distribution of cattle. Those who had many head would have to deliver a proportionately greater number than those who had a few. They would receive payment for the confiscated animals and—a cattle card entitling them to keep whatever cattle the Nazis would let them have.

Accepting the card meant recognition of this system of looting, of the whole shameful, hypocritical organization of the Nazis, who under pretext of regulating the food situation, simply plunder and steal as much as they can. The farmers of Luxemburg province knew that at the

same time the German authorities had raised the cost of occupation of the country, after two years of occupation, by 50 per cent. They decided to give in only to force.

The Nazi newspapers tell the story of some 9,000 cattle owners who refused to comply with the new regulations. They describe in detail a military expedition organized by the Nazis to enforce their system. Two hundred and fifty men, including 100 gendarmes, 32 officials, controllers and herders, descended upon the village of Longchamps which before the war had exactly 1,245 inhabitants. The following is a Nazi newspaper's account of the experiences the expedition encountered at most of the farms:

"We entered a typical farm house and were met by the owner who gave us a look which clearly told us we were intruding. We asked him if he was willing to regularize his position. There was a short silence and then he rushed to the attack. 'What have you come here for? Your laws, let me tell you, are unconstitutional! You have no right to make us take your cattle card. You are stronger than we are now. Two hundred and fifty armed men to a village of 1,200 men. We give in to you because we have to, but, by God, our day will come, believe me! As surely as I stand before you, the peasants will settle their accounts with you. You will not always have the upper hand, and after the war we will hang you with the ropes of your own herders.' "

At many other farms, the inquisitors were astonished to meet a great number of people standing in the stables. The former tried to put the peasants out, but, according to the newspapers, one of them said: "Get on with you! I am the owner's father, I guess I have a right to be here!"

Another one said: "I am his nephew. Here I am and here I stay," or again, "As for me I am his uncle; I can see him when I like." So every relative was represented.

The paper continues: "Each time the farmer seemed to waver a little in his attitude, all the others started to yell: 'Don't take the card! Resist them! Don't accept the money! Don't give way to the rats!' "

In most cases, the controllers had to use force and confiscate all the peasant's animals since he refused to accept the cattle card. When the conquerors left, "they saw a compact mass of peasants, dumb, immobile and staring with threatening eyes."

Tragedy has spread throughout the world now. It is on the battle-lines, it is in the skies, it is above and beneath the waves of the seven seas. It even enters the stables of the peasants whom Bruegel immortalized in his paintings.

It is, however, a comforting thought to know that even there human dignity prevails, and courage is displayed in the noblest fashion, creating at the same time a feeling of comradeship among people and presaging the best for the world after Armageddon will have subsided.

1.—Handbook for the Perfect Plunderer

EXACTLY SEVEN HOURS AFTER THE GERMANS TOOK THE town and port of Antwerp, in 1940, a fleet of trucks arrived to ship everything edible or of industrial value to Germany. Even while the battle was raging, bills were already posted in the big towns, phrased with such magnificent hypocrisy that they are worth quoting:

"All foodstuffs, raw materials and half-finished products are of primary importance to the economic life of the occupied countries. The British blockade will render these stocks insufficient; therefore, *in the interest of the occupied territories,* all goods enumerated below are to be requisitioned: foodstuffs, raw materials, half-finished products and all other commodities which are scarce or of which there are insufficient quantities."

When it was found that there were not enough trucks to carry the plunder to Germany, the goods were frozen, to be taken away at a more convenient time. A single company (the length of its name making up for that), the Allgemeine Warenverkehrsgesellschaft (General Products Distribution Company) is now in charge of exports to Germany which consist of one third of Belgian production

of textiles, hides, copper, iron ore, etc. Since Belgium has practically no raw materials of its own, a great number of Belgian industries have had to slow down or close entirely.

Besides agriculture, the country's sole wealth is coal. The Nazis ordered the Belgians to send coal to France. The Belgians hoped to get in exchange wheat from the fertile northern provinces of France, but the Nazis prevented it and in some places in the Seine-et-Marne barley was left rotting in the fields.

In ten months, 5,000,000 tons of coal were exported on German orders, with no explanation; 125,000 tons a month were ordered sent to the Germans in France. In the meantime the Belgian population was rationed to the extent that it suffered as much from cold as from hunger. Repeatedly the Nazi-controlled newspapers told about children and old people found frozen in their beds. For a family of four, the monthly ration was 275 pounds of coal!

Before the invasion a clearing system existed between Belgium and many other European countries. The Germans are using this system to complete their pillage of Belgian economy. Nearly everything that is exported from Belgium goes through the clearing house. Up to now, Germany is in the red for $300,000,000, since everything goes out and almost nothing is imported into Belgium. The Germans have established clearing houses for Belgium with a dozen European countries and everything is settled through the German clearing houses. Whenever the balance is in favor of Belgium, the credit goes to the Germans.

There were about a dozen different marks before the invasion (theoretical, frozen, tourist, etc.), the "free"

mark being worth only three to four Belgian francs. The Nazis decided that its value would be ten francs—a little later it became 12.5 francs. When a Nazi spent 1,000 francs in Belgium, he paid 80 marks to the Reichsbank, whereas in Germany he could have had only one third, or half, of the products he acquired for the same amount.

Having complete control of the administration of all financial and industrial institutions, this is what the Nazis did to Belgian finance:

From 1939 to 1943 the public debt in Belgium under the weight of the German taxes rose from 63 to 118 billion francs:

1939.....	63 billion	francs	
1940.....	74	"	"
1941.....	93	"	"
1942.....	113	"	"
1943.....	118	"	" (up to June)

These figures need no comment.

2.—*The Controller and the Ox*

TO PREVENT UNAUTHORIZED SLAUGHTER OF ANIMALS IN Belgium the Germans have proclaimed a number of decrees of extreme severity. Not only are heavy fines im-

posed on those who are convicted of this misdemeanor but in some cases even the death penalty can be pronounced. Punishing the death of a pig by the death of a man seems to fit in exactly with Nazi philosophy.

In the beginning the Germans tried to get the collaboration of the Belgians in order to organize the distribution of food in the country. Their arguments sounded sensible and their appeal to the officials and to the public was a marvel of logic and common sense. "If nobody does any hoarding," they said, "there will be food enough for everyone. But every producer, every farmer, should tell exactly what he can contribute to the food supply and we, with paternal benevolence and due severity for transgressors, will distribute the amount equally among all. But we should of course know exactly how much there is and where everything is stored and produced."

It sounded good, but a few days after this marvelous discourse the already-hungry inhabitants of a small Flemish town saw in their local station a freight car full of potatoes being shipped to Germany. On the freight car the Germans had affixed a huge sign: "Gift of the Belgian women to their German sisters." The small town went without potatoes for several weeks but Frau Müller und Frau Schmidt had a wonderful time: they received not only a message of good will from a conquered nation but they got a present along with it. "*Krieg,*" they exclaimed, "*it's wonderful!*" In a borough of Brussels the paternal Germans requisitioned 175 head of cattle; they would take care of the distribution of the meat among the population. They did. They allotted 150 head of cattle to themselves and 25 to the town. Through the ration system, the half million German soldiers who at the begin-

ning of the war were stationed in Belgium, among a population of eight million, received three times as much as the Belgians and the German civilians received twice as much. They still do.

Noticing all these remarkable demonstrations of German paternalism, the Belgians organized the black market. For some time it permitted those who had money to obtain supplementary provisions, but as time went on prices went up excessively and the black market became practically the privilege of the happy few. However, a great feeling of solidarity among all classes of society prevailed, and according to all reports those who were in a position to help did so very effectively and generously.

At that moment the Germans got hungry too. They had all the money they wanted. They just printed it, that's all! They resorted to the black market too, and when people objected to that practice, the *Brüsseler Zeitung* openly came out for it. It was the strangest situation: on the one hand the Germans loading more and more food control ordinances onto the Belgians, prescribing terrible punishment for food traffickers, on the other hand the semi-official *Gazette* saying that the Germans used the black market and had a perfect right to do so.

In 1942 the Germans found the situation so confused that they decided to do something about it. They discovered that the Belgian courts, which were to deal with offenses relating to food regulations, sometimes congratulated the transgressors, saying that nobody could survive without indulging in black market traffic. Therefore the Germans put up special Nazi courts to deal with those cases. These tribunals are also to protect the locust horde of food controllers the Germans appointed to protect

their organization. Some of them get shot, some get beaten when on duty—in short these defenders of law and order are an unhappy lot and very much need protection.

A recent small incident shows to what extent the Germans mean business. Like an Andersen fairy tale it allows us to lift up the roof of the house the Nazis built and look inside.

The radio in Belgium was an official institution, government-owned and managed. The Germans took it over, dismissed the entire staff and put in some of their men to run the show along Nazi lines. The big modern broadcasting studio is full of German soldiers. At one time these gentlemen bought an ox on the black market; it was a choice piece, a delightful morsel. Every employee in the building received written notice of the fact and was *ordered* to buy one pound at 43 francs ($1.30) a pound, which means that it was not exactly a bargain.

But in a radio station news travels fast and in some way or another a food controller was informed of what had happened. He did some profound thinking, he reread the solemn ordinances of his German masters and decided that Fate had chosen him to show that nobody is above the law, not even radio officials in German service.

The controller appealed to four of his aides and the impressive delegation, representing Equal Justice For All, marched down to the Brussels radio station. They called on the manager of the building and stated their case.

Then things really began to happen. A hot argument followed. In fact it was so hot that the Germans got hold of the delegation, stripped them and gave them the grandest beating they had ever dreamed of in their lives

—a third degree special, with all the trimmings. When the Germans had thus expounded their view of the question, the five unfortunate controllers, victims of a very high conception of their duty, found themselves back where they started, all bruised and beaten on the Place Sainte Croix, in front of the radio building.

It is a dreadful thing when five people who still have some illusions about Nazi Justice come to lose them. Let us hope that the tide of the war will not give them any chance to recover from this unexpected coup, from this "most unkindest cut of all."

3.—*"The Little Queen of the Road"*

AMERICANS MAY BE MECHANICALLY MINDED, BUT THERE is one thing about which they are entirely ignorant—the bicycle. The European connoisseur looks with a mixture of wonder and horror at the heavy, clumsy contraptions on which American messenger boys catapult through traffic, in defiance of all laws and common sense. He knows that for a bicycle the height of elegance is to be as light, as aerial, as possible. A bicycle must be a dragon fly, as thin and as invisibly muscular as this insect. The American bicycle seems to him a ponderous, overfed drone.

This difference in type and build might be explained by scholarly theories on the influence of social surroundings. In the United States, the bicycle automatically suggests a messenger boy, but in Holland your first thought would be of Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina herself, pedaling around over her flat countryside.

Much has been said about our need for "escape." Everybody, in every latitude, tries to get away from his daily routine from time to time. He generally does it in a way which vaguely suggests the romantic scenes of the past. Instead of a neighing steed, he uses a powerful car; and in Europe he most often resorts to the services of his humble but faithful servant, the bicycle.

No people in Europe were more bicycle-minded than the Belgians. With a population of 8,500,000 people, there were nearly 3,000,000 bicycles which must have been a record, with the possible exception of Holland, where even the ministers went to Cabinet meetings on that vehicle. But if the Belgians were outclassed in numbers, they were the only Europeans who could get the utmost production from their bicycles. They had become the Paganinis of the bicycle, the Heifetzes of the "velocipede," because they did not consider it essentially an easy means of locomotion, but a means of rapid transportation. The Dutch sit on their bicycles as if they were riding a thoroughbred, dignified and erect; but the Belgians crouch over it, streamlining themselves, and nobody therefore can beat a Belgian on a bicycle as far as speed is concerned. The flat country of Flanders, with the strong winds blowing in from the sea, became the training ground of champions. There was never a village carnival without its cycling contest, and every year all Belgians

followed the "Flandriens" who were defending the national colors in the famous Tour de France, winning every stretch in the flat country, fighting like devils in the Jura or Pyrenees mountains.

When the Germans invaded Belgium for the second time in May 1940, the photographs of the refugees who clogged the roads to France showed thousands of cyclists among the streams of refugees. The 3,000,000 bicycles had taken the road of exile. Almost incredible stories of speed and endurance have been told about Belgians who reached the farthest corners of France on their bicycles.

Gradually the Germans took over all of the automotive vehicles in Belgium until practically no private individual was allowed to use a car. As usual they tried to camouflage the reasons for their actions in order to hide the true motive of their policy. Of course, they needed all the Belgian cars they could lay their hands on, but when confiscating them they told the populace that this had to be done in punishment for some "crime" or other, committed by unknown saboteurs.

Recently, however, they unmasked their batteries a little more and gave proof of how hard up they are for means of transportation. They punished the city of Liége a few weeks ago as reprisal for an act of sabotage. As a rule the German commander used to impose a heavy fine on the city—from one to five million francs ($30,000 to $150,000). But after all, these fines do not affect the individual citizen much. If the city has to pay a fine, he feels it only next year in increased taxation and certainly every citizen of Liége or Brussels would gladly pay a few dollars if this sum were to pay for the blowing up of the Kommandantur or for the death of a traitor.

After two years of study—and everybody knows that the Germans are very conscientious students—they found a new means of punishing the recalcitrant Belgian. Their discovery—Mr. LaGuardia would call it a "beaut"—was based on the fact that, as everywhere in the world, the little people in Belgium were also those who resisted Nazi interference most effectively. They should be taught a lesson. The Germans had already taken their food, leaving them on starvation rations; they had already slowed down and decreased railway transportation. They had a sudden brain wave, a stroke of genius: they ordered Liége to deliver up 300 bicycles, and a few days later they imposed a fine of 5,000 bicycles on Brussels.

By so doing they punish the little people who depend on their bicycles to go to work, who use them to go into the country to get supplementary food, who have only their bicycles as a means of escape from the drudgery of life under the occupation. There is, however, one significant side to this action. The Germans apparently have no regard for Belgian money which they have undermined through all kinds of inflationary measures. They want real values, things that are worth while. Among the few things which were left to the Belgians, besides a little sunshine and ample rain, was the bicycle for which the sports writers had, in time of peace, invented such a poetic and endearing a term as "la petite reine de la route," the little queen of the road. It is a strange thing that in the midst of a world upheaval, this silly, enthusiastic, sentimental nickname, invented by the sports writers, should suddenly acquire significance and even justification.

4.—*The Chimney Sweeps' Rise to Power*

IT HAS BECOME QUITE A HABIT, THESE LAST FEW YEARS, to refer to German efficiency, to German sense of order, with a feeling of profound admiration, even with a kind of superstitious awe.

This is not only the result of the real superiority the Germans displayed against the sloppiness of the Allied efforts in the first encounters of the war, it is also an achievement of persistent German propaganda. Fortunately for the Germans, they had an effective groundwork upon which to base their claims. Those who have seen the German film, *Sieg im Westen* (Victory in the West) will remember that high-pitched, metallic voice of the commentator, who at every scene told the audience that German efficiency was something that no one else could begin to approach. A building was blown up by a German bomb. "There you are," said that incredible von Stroheim voice, "Germany at her best!" A dive bomber gunned an English truck fleet. "Again," said the voice, "German efficiency." Not a French or English plane in sight; who would dare do anything against such a machine controlled by the

master race, the creator of that eighth wonder of the world called German efficiency, German order?

At the time, this disagreeable sermon sounded rather impressive. There was a point to it. The British, who are classical-minded people, know that one of the oldest precepts of good warfare is learning from the enemy. They soon did away with a good deal of *laisser aller*, of easy-going methods, and even Mr. Hitler must by now regret his wise cracks about those military idiots, his enemies.

Efficiency, a profound love of order, is no doubt a spontaneous characteristic of the German mind. Other nations have to acquire it, and do so with various degrees of success. This differentiates the average German from the majority of the rest of the world. It is indeed quite natural for every normal person, taken individually, to live according to his own fancy, along the pattern of his own order. He soon finds out that this attitude is impossible, and that, even without religious considerations, concessions have to be made to his surroundings and to his fellow men. In the least civilized communities some sort of order prevails, but this does not imply that in that community where a maximum of order prevails, a maximum of civilization is attained. Augustine says somewhere that order leads to God; he does not say that order is God. The German philosophers, the German moralists have, however, created a spiritual confusion in this domain which is a most remarkable achievement. Judged by history, the military crimes of Germany might, in the end, prove less terrible than the constant and malicious perversion of the mind perpetrated by the Nazis as final executors of German destiny. It should be made clear, every so often, that the last war was a rather innocuous

military expedition on the part of the Reich, with minor spiritual implications, while this war is a crusade implying a new religion, a renouncement of all that has been the pride and the glory of humanity up to now. When Nazis die, their parents announce in the Nazi newspaper, "He died in the Faith of His Fuehrer . . ." Even a convinced atheist must shudder at blasphemy of this kind.

Does a normal person desire order, love it, long for it? Of course not; he submits to it. Some do so willingly, automatically; some do so with reluctance and some under protest. The Belgians are among those who protest the most, but who are the very last to break order once it is established. The Germans, on the contrary, have revered *Ordnung* for many decades. Once a visitor to Mainz stopped in front of an ugly, red stone official building and read on its wall, inscribed in mammoth letters:

> Nach seinem Sinne leben ist gemein.
> Der Edle strebt nach Ordnung und Gesetz.

a quotation from Goethe which means:

> To live according to your fancy is despicable,
> The noble-minded strive for order and for law.

He left Mainz on the next available train. He could not stand the atmosphere of an entire city, busy achieving such an ideal!

Order and efficiency, just like alcohol and coffee, are excellent things if you take them with discernment. Too heavy doses are bad for normal minds. Take, for instance, the single act of walking, of marching. Of course, an automobile-minded American looks down on pedestrian

activity, but the majority of the rest of the world practices it quite a lot. People don't pride themselves on it; some even like it, but most of them lose all interest in it once it must be done in rank and file, with a couple of thousand other people who do the same thing. An ordinary human being likes to stroll, to walk leisurely, to hold in the hollow of his guiding hand the nervous angle of a lady's elbow, but no normally-constituted man craves "marching." The Germans are different, and certainly the Nazis are. For years they have had as one of their most popular slogans, *Wir marschieren!* One of their Party songs begins, "When the S. S. marches." Everywhere in Germany you could see those magic words, "We march!" It meant a lot more than it said. To march meant that they were on their way, but the implication was also that there was something magical and divine about marching in a group, in strict and disciplined order.

In the same spirit, when in 1914 Louvain was destroyed, the library burned down, the inhabitants slaughtered, Commander von Mannteufel (a predestined name it has been said) published an order of the day which read: "Order Reigns in Louvain."

One of France's greatest writers, François Mauriac, was the first to point out that there is something ridiculous and grotesque in sin. It is a deviation from the natural order, an error. If we laugh at a man who opens an umbrella in the bright sunshine, we could laugh also at a man whose conduct is such that it attacks the natural order; he is ridiculous because he is wrong. A similar comment could be made on many of the Germans' measures in the occupied countries. They are inspired by a per-

version of mind, by a sin against common sense, by a lack of balance which transforms them into something grotesque and painful. Whenever there is too much of a good thing, the devil has a hand in it.

Let us take a look at the latest German legislation in Belgium. Assuredly the complete set of Nazi rules and regulations is the summit of order, the Himalaya of *Ordnung*. But the reader is impressed by a growing sense of the ridiculous. The Nazis have robbed Belgium of its coal; the majority of the people have very little food and suffer cruelly from the cold. They burn wood and paper and whatever they can find. They try to keep the heat as long as possible in their rooms. It has happened several times that mothers, ignorant of the danger of asphixiation, have kept their children in the only heated room of the house, with all the doors and windows closed. In three months of the winter of 1941–42, twelve people were poisoned from carbon monoxide. Don't think for a moment, however, that the Germans decided to give the Belgians a greater part of their mines' abundant coal production. Oh no! Their perverted minds found quite a different solution.

With due solemnity they announced a new decree. Pre-invasion Belgium, they said, was a country without *Ordnung*, a bohemian's paradise, an Eden of lawless, orderless anarchists. "In this country," says the decree, with an afflicted tone, "there does not exist a regulation on chimney sweeps." There is no order in the size of toothpicks either, but that will come soon. "Moreover," says the Herr Gouverneur, "there are only 52 chimney sweeps in all of Belgium. We therefore have decided to create a Guild of

Chimney Sweeps, and we have entrusted Mr. René van Laeren with the direction of this organization." The decree goes on in the most solemn manner.

Real order could be accomplished by giving people enough fuel so that they would not be obliged to keep every atom of heat inside their walls. Perverted order consists in combating the results of one's own actions with means which have nothing to do with the source of the evil. It is as if the proprietor of a poisoned well decided to have every cup thoroughly cleansed before use. The only weapon the Belgians can use against these hateful regulations is ridicule, but the time will come when they will be able to extirpate the perversion of the mind not only with the foil of their wit, but with the sword of their wrath and the fire of purifying retribution.

5.—Death of a Hero

A STATEMENT OF THE UNDERGROUND PRESS IN BELGIUM gives the list of sabotage accomplished in one of the early months of 1943 as follows:

233 freight cars of hay set on fire
4 warehouses of hay set on fire
7 warehouses of flax set on fire
38 locomotives and 18 freight cars destroyed
6 railroad repair shops destroyed
1 electric power house destroyed

5 acts of sabotage in coal mines
4 acts of sabotage in metal factories
19 electric pylons destroyed
22 electric cabins destroyed
6 electric stations destroyed
1 transformer dynamited
3 shipbuilding yards sabotaged
3 canal locks dynamited
5 industrial plants wrecked.

This is open warfare against the German war machine, and it strikes where it is most effective. The underground statistician who drew up the above list did not mention another phase of the activity of the United Front of Patriotic Resistance, a phase dealing with the limited number of traitors who seek German favor in occupied Belgium. As a matter of fact, these traitors are not very dangerous; everybody knows them and despises them. Even the Germans sometimes show how they feel about them. They use these people and treat them according to their usefulness to the German cause. When that usefulness diminishes, German interest in them also slackens, and they are apt to be treated with undisguised contempt.

From Ganelon who betrayed Roland at Roncevaux to Benedict Arnold and Lord Haw Haw, the psychology of the traitor has become well known. Almost any base motive may inspire treason, but among the most usual reasons is unfulfilled ambition and the desire to play a role, even if this role is to be enacted on the border of a precipice. The traitor knows that he betrays and the more intelligent he is—some intelligence at least is needed to be a traitor—the more his conscience will affect his writings and utterances.

Not long ago, the foremost Belgian traitor among the newspapermen, one Paul Colin, was killed by a patriot. He was a man of great literary ability, writer on matters of art and letters, and not one of his publications was really inferior. But everything he wrote was sour, leaving the reader impressed by his vast factual knowledge, but at the same time ill at ease and unsatisfied. So strongly conscious was Colin of his own character that he wrote at the end of 1918, when Belgium was still occupied by the Germans: "The defeatist that I am made every effort to resist my habits of treason, but they finally got the best of me." But so weak and kindhearted are people that this man, a few years later, having published a book to glorify the country he had betrayed in 1914–18 and grossly insulted afterwards, was welcomed again as a convert to decent behavior. But from the moment when Germany under Hitler's impulse began gaining strength, Colin returned like the dog of the Scriptures to his own vomit, and when the Wehrmacht had overrun Belgium, Colin was present again to become the Number One pamphleteer of the New Order. In that capacity, he attacked and denounced his own countrymen. Whenever a loyal newspaper man, out of a job on account of the war, was given a meager writing job in some municipal welfare organization, Colin was there trying to take his private vengeance, pointing him out to the vindictive Germans. There are few depths of human baseness he did not reach. His presence, his publications were a constant provocation to all patriotic citizens. He was killed on April 15, 1943.

The film producers as well as the novelists in the United States have tried to give to the American public

a clear picture of the mentality of the members of the underground movement in the Axis-occupied countries. The results of these endeavors have been extremely effective from a dramatic point of view. From the standpoint of psychological probability they are often puzzling. A German newspaper in Belgium prints the account of the trial of the three boys who were accused of killing Colin. It is a remarkable and enlightening document. The principal accused was a young man of about twenty—Arnaut Fraiteur of Brussels. He belonged to a well-to-do family. The Nazi newspaper stresses the fact that he was well-dressed and that he looked more like an Oxford student than a Belgian boy. Says the Nazi newssheet, "He was very calm." His accomplices were two simple boys who declared that they were making a living by acting for a secret organization. When the Germans tried to make them reveal names, they gave only a few first names as reference.

Fraiteur was questioned on his reasons for committing his "crime." "As I could not join the army of liberation," he said, "I wanted to take part in one of the patriotic activities. I was approached by an emissary of a group, but I asked first if this group was Communistic. When I found out it wasn't, I joined. I was ordered to take part in an attack on Colin. I obeyed. I was only to stand guard, not to shoot, but when the moment for the shooting had come, the boy who was supposed to do it was absent. So I shot. I had a number of addresses where I could hide. I was supposed to go to France, but things went wrong."

The prosecutor asked Fraiteur if he felt any remorse about his action. The boy gave no clear answer, but when

he was questioned about his motives, he stood up straight and said that he claimed the full responsibility for his political action.

At every moment of the trial the German prosecutor tried to find proof that the underground movement was Communist-inspired. All three accused denied it. Cross-examining Fraiteur, the prosecutor asked if he believed in God. The boy, apparently noticing the political bias of the question, gave this remarkable answer which bears testimony to his bravery as well as to his intellectual honesty. "I do believe in God," he said, "although I'm no Catholic."

It is not astonishing that a young man of such mettle when hearing that he was sentenced to be hanged by the neck—according to the Nazi newspaper—remained perfectly calm. He had done a good and righteous thing, he had exterminated an individual whose very existence was an insult to human decency. He had not betrayed his comrades. He had tried to take full responsibility for the entire "crime." He had not given in an inch to German anti-Russian propaganda tactics.

In its utter simplicity, the account of this trial sheds more light upon the forceful soul of the saboteur and avenger than a thousand pages of comment or fantasy written on this side of the ocean.

1.—*The Official: From Red Tape to Red Blood*

IN ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE LITERARY DOCUMENTS of ancient Egypt, the author examines the comparative merits of the different professions known to him. He pities the manual laborer, the soldier who aches under his equipment; he feels nothing but compassion mingled with contempt for the merchant who roams the country for a little gain; their occupations all seem equally unsatisfactory to him, and he concludes that only the scribe, the public official is a happy man. The official is honored, he is wise, he combines an understanding of social problems with a knowledge of science and a perfect balance of mind. Never has such an enthusiastic defense of officialdom been made. That, of course, was some four thousand years ago.

It seems that one of the unavoidable results of the democratic régime is a diminution of the public official's moral position. To a certain extent this may be due to the ever-increasing number of scribes, but, whatever the reason, it is quite certain that the official in modern society does not spontaneously command the respect of the "gaping populace." On the contrary, most of the time

he is an object of ridicule or compassion. He has little social standing for he is, as a rule, badly paid. Fifty years ago, in Belgium, young men with sufficient means would devote themselves to public service and consider it a privilege. In so doing they established their own social position in the world, and at the same time made it clear that they were willing to sacrifice their chances of increasing their wealth, in order to serve the state. But the number of people who were at the same time able and willing to do so diminished so rapidly that today they have been almost entirely replaced in Belgium, as in most other European countries, by people who must consider administration as a career. If the Egyptian scribe were to come back and make a survey of the condition of his colleagues in the 20th century, he would probably revise his hieroglyphs and "pipe down" a bit.

Belgian administrators and civil servants rated high among government officials of western Europe before the war. They were often more appreciated by those foreigners who came in contact with them than by their own countrymen. Foreign governments in the Near East, in Asia and in South America frequently resorted to their services for the organization of their westernized administrations. If Germany's *Feldwebels* became instructors in the Sultan's army, Belgians organized Persia's finances or told the Peruvians or the Chileans how to construct an effective educational system. In the Congo, according to the repeated testimonies of neutral and all-too-often unfriendly observers, Belgian officialdom is doing an excellent job.

After all, administering a country as well as governing it requires essentially sound common sense. Long ago Erasmus found out "that nowhere in the world are there

so many men gifted with good, common sense and solid knowledge" as in Belgium. These sensible men have created a tradition of good public housekeeping and their honesty and incorruptibility was public knowledge.

From a psychological as well as from a political point of view, it is interesting to examine how these men have stood up against the continuous pressure of the Germans. Their situation is certainly not enviable. Most of them depend on their jobs for a living. They are family men trying to feed and educate their numerous offspring. Separated from their leaders, the government ministers, they were forced to assume a terrible responsibility. In times of peace each of their acts was protected by ministerial authority. The official did not answer those who attacked him. The minister was supposed to defend or to blame him. He was the natural scapegoat when things went wrong and when everything went well he was there to applaud his chief.

At the time of the invasion there were twelve officials in charge of the different governmental departments in Belgium. Except for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these departments were under the direction of their Secretaries-General, who had been ordered back from France to Brussels at the time of the French defeat. They would have to deal with the Germans. They would have to see to it that The Hague Convention was observed and that the Belgian administrative machine was not used by the occupant for any other purpose than the preservation of peace and order in the country.

The first thing the Germans did was to look them over —these twelve men "good and true." And they immediately found that they did not like one particular man.

This was the head of the Department of Economic Affairs, a young man who had lived in America and had even published a ponderous volume on United States customs tariffs. He had been negotiating with the Germans for several years before the war, and the Nazis had found out that he was not their type. They ousted him immediately and substituted one of their good friends. As the occupation went on the Germans proceeded to influence practically all of the other ministerial departments. Having attacked the Ministry of the Interior which is in charge of the appointment of mayors and town clerks, they pushed out of their way the Secretary-General who strongly protested their policy. By lowering the age limit by five years, they succeeded in replacing four other of the twelve officials with men who were more to their liking. But even so all did not run smoothly. In the Department of Communications which controls the railroads, they wanted to make use of this ministry's facilities to recruit workers for the German railways. The attitude of the official in charge resulted in his temporary arrest. The Secretary-General of Labor relinquished his post in protest against the German recruiting policy.

The Nazis appointed a Mr. J. Vervaeck in his place and increased their recruiting campaign in the reckless way described earlier in these pages. On October 7, 1942, an order was issued, introducing compulsory labor. This gentleman, seeing that the Ministry of Labor with all its services was being transformed into a German recruiting machine, wrote a letter to the German authorities which was published by the underground newspaper *La Libre Belgique* on December 1, 1942.

As a rule an administrative letter does not make very

good reading. It is often worded in dry-as-dust language, sternly avoids the use of literary flourishes and is generally couched in worn-out terms handed down through the ages. Only the circumstances could endow such a document with a beauty and a grandeur of its own. It seems that Mr. Vervaeck wrote such a letter which, in his old age, he will be able to reread with satisfaction and pride. This is what he wrote to the chief of the German Civil Administration:

"In your letter of October 7, addressed to the College of Secretaries-General, you were good enough to explain to them the *raison d'être* of the measures taken and to give them certain details relative to their application.

"Although these ordinances apply to all the inhabitants of the country and are thus outside the scope of my Department, it is clear that they chiefly affect the working classes whose interests it is my duty to protect. Consequently, I consider it a duty to inform you of my opinion, even before the Secretaries-General have registered their answer to your letter.

"The Ordinance of March 6, 1942, introducing compulsory labor over and above the needs of the army of occupation, which was not warranted by the necessity of maintaining order and public life, and which organized the use of manpower within the framework of a general economic plan, had already overstepped the limits of the requisitioning permitted by The Hague regulations. Consequently the Belgian authorities registered the most express reservations.

"At that moment, through your letter of March 18, 1942, you made a point of calming the fears and anxiety —which you claimed to understand—aroused by this

Ordinance by making certain promises and notably by stressing that the measures decreed would not affect the system of voluntary recruitment for work in Germany.

"But the scope of the new Ordinances exceeds that of the Ordinance of March 6, 1942, both in the extreme gravity of the measures taken and in the excessively painful consequences which will inevitably result from their application to Belgian workers. Their terms, moreover, appear even more obviously contrary to the rules of The Hague Convention than those of the previous Ordinance. Consequently, you will not be surprised to hear that, even pending a decision as to the attitude which the Secretaries-General will adopt, I cannot but register a lively protest against these measures. Naturally, I shall be unable to take part in any way in the carrying out of these measures —for reasons which the German authority certainly took into consideration in refraining, as you emphasize in your letter, from inviting the Belgian authorities to participate in the measures in question.

"Finally, I must inform you that I am no longer able to assume further responsibility in connection with the Labor Office. Ever since the publication of the Ordinance of March 6, 1942, these Offices have had to submit to the instructions of the Feldkommandanturen and Oberfeldkommandanturen in connection with the practical application of this Ordinance. You will no doubt agree that it is impossible to maintain a responsibility born of an administrative hierarchy in a case where all control and authority have ceased to exist."

In ordinary times a man like Mr. Vervaeck may have been considered a Knight of the Red Tape, a dusty official obscurely accomplishing a not-very-important task

in this world. The newspapers would have insulted him and his colleagues, the man in the street would sometimes have spoken of him with that facile and virtuous indignation which animates good citizens against "administration" all over the world. He himself would have walked home every night to his slippers and his evening paper, and he would have died of old age, a respected and humble worker in the nation's meager vineyards. It took Nazi brutality and cruelty to make him realize, as did hundreds of his minor colleagues, that these are times that try men's souls. The Belgians have all of a sudden seen that the official has a soul, the soul of a gentleman, a creature Mr. Goebbels long ago promised to exterminate from the earth. But we all know that Mr. Goebbels is keeping fewer and fewer of his promises.

2.—*The Mayor: "A New Code for Mayors"*

THERE EXIST IN BELGIUM ABOUT 2,600 COMMUNITIES, each of them as eager to safeguard its municipal autonomy as Athens was in ancient Greece. This tendency, which may at times lead to absurd situations, has deep roots in the country's history. Only a little later than the towns of

Northern Italy, the Belgian towns asserted themselves, fighting their sovereigns and establishing their individuality and their local codes. Autonomy, or what practically amounted to it, was often acquired only after open warfare, sieges, decimation and other violent events. After Belgium finally secured her independence as a country in 1830, the Constitution, as drafted by the National Congress, took these historic elements into consideration. As great a measure of autonomy as a centralized modern administration could permit was granted to towns and villages.

They are each governed by a Board, of Burgomaster and Aldermen, the burgomaster (mayor) usually being appointed by the King from the majority group in the City Council. In the absence of the government, as during a foreign occupation, the mayors of Brussels and of other large cities in the country automatically become the representative defenders of the national commonweal. When the occupying power infringes the regulations of The Hague Convention, which stipulates the limits of the occupier's authority, the mayor is supposed not only to defend the wellbeing of his fellow citizens, but to become the spokesman of the country itself, the *defensor civitatis* in the broader sense, the symbol of the endangered fatherland, the guardian of international law.

This broad interpretation of the mayor's duty in times of foreign occupation was illustrated, with magnificent clarity, by the late Adolphe Max, Burgomaster of Brussels, when the troops of Wilhelm II marched into that city. The story goes that when the Military Commander, making himself at home in Max's office, placed his revolver on the mayor's desk in a threatening gesture, Max calmly

deposited his fountain pen next to the German's weapon. A few weeks later, Max protested, by way of a placarded proclamation, against a lying report which the Germans circulated about him. He was sent to prison for the duration.

When Max died on November 6, 1939, he was succeeded by one of the aldermen, Dr. F. J. Van de Meulebroeck. The new mayor looks like a character from a Hals painting, presiding over some friendly drinking feast where everyone is clad in glowing black satin, each heavy, short neck encircled with a delicate white lace collar. Dr. Van de Meulebroeck had been in charge of the Department of Public Works in Brussels for over twenty years, and his record was honest and efficient. In the first World War, he had volunteered as a doctor and had been decorated several times for his bravery under fire. He is an amiable man, a plain, blunt fellow, very popular with the common people and very much esteemed by the better informed citizen. He does not have perhaps the subtle distinction of speech which was one of Max's chief assets; he is, however, the embodiment of common sense and of honesty.

Six months after his appointment as mayor, the Germans again marched into Brussels. Dr. Van de Meulebroeck received the delegates of the *Wehrmacht* on the steps of the venerable Town Hall. A photograph shows him tense and erect, Hitler's "tall, blond beasts of prey" surrounding him and towering over his short, stocky figure. For some time this photograph was the only news the outside world had of the Brussels mayor.

Wise from their experience in the last war, the Nazis knew that opposition to their régime would be concen-

trated in the municipal governments even more than in the Belgian ministerial offices, which had been entrusted with only limited powers and authority by the Belgian Government on the day of the invasion. In the Department of the Interior, however, they found a man, Mr. J. Vossen, Secretary-General, who showed no enthusiasm in executing their orders tending to curtail the power and influence of the communal authorities. They immediately replaced him by one of their henchmen, Gerard Romsée, who began at once to search for a method of replacing those mayors who were reluctant to accept the "New Order." In violation of the Constitution, he issued a decree establishing a sixty-year age limit for public officers. As the function of mayor is the result of a free election, this decree was entirely unjustified and contrary to the democratic spirit of the Belgian laws. By the end of December 1941, Romsée had managed to dismiss and replace 626 mayors, 818 aldermen and 49 town clerks. Dr. Van de Meulebroeck had just reached the age of sixty, and he was, therefore, due to go. The Nazis, however, tried to avoid a renewal of the unpleasant Max affair and told the burgomaster that they would grant him a prolongation of his tenure provided he would follow their instructions and "collaborate" with their policy.

Dr. Van de Meulebroeck said no. He did more. On June 30, 1941, he told the whole story in a proclamation which was secretly printed and, according to local custom and tradition, posted on walls in Brussels. In this document the mayor told the population what had happened and informed them that he would be forced to go. "However," he concluded, "I have not relinquished my office. I am still your mayor, and I shall continue to be."

At noontime, the people of Brussels read the proclamation and, foreseeing what would happen, they hastily copied it. Office girls took the text down in shorthand, while people dictated it to them and kept watch for the Nazi patrol, which arrived before long, dispersing the crowd, slashing at the texts with their bayonets or pasting them over with *Verordnungen* of all kinds.

Late in the afternoon the news went around that Van de Meulebroeck was to be arrested. The aldermen and the personnel of the Town Hall gathered around the mayor in one of the old Gothic meeting rooms. The eldest among them promised, in the name of all present, that they would "never submit to the occupying power or to the traitors who agree to collaborate with it." Van de Meulebroeck said goodbye. He avoided all pathos, facing his fate with a calm courage. "I will not be away very long," he said. "I tell you au revoir, not adieu."

At seven that evening the Germans marched in. Van de Meulebroeck was arrested. His aldermen and secretaries followed him through the resounding corridors of the Town Hall. The Nazis shouted at them angrily in German, then in French. The mayor halted and asked his friends not to create an incident which would result in their arrest.

The next day, the Nazis in sullen anger imposed a fine of 5,000,000 francs ($160,000) on the city of Brussels. Trying to be humorous, they called it the "Van de Meulebroeck tax."

For the Nazis, the incident was closed. For the democratic world the story had just begun. It was the first open manifestation of the spirit of resistance in Belgium. It has been followed by thousands of acts of resistance, by

the execution of hundreds of Belgian patriots, by the sanguinary testimony of the Belgian's faith in justice, in decency, in the democratic way of life.

Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, commenting on Van de Meulebroeck's proclamation, called it, very aptly, "a new code for mayors in all democracies."

Van de Meulebroeck's courageous conduct, which the Nazis tried to ridicule as a "vain declamatory gesture," has shown to the world that the Brussels mayor had a right to say in his proclamation:

"THOSE WHO REALLY BELONG TO OUR RACE, FEAR NOTHING NOR ANYBODY IN THIS WORLD. THEY HAVE ONLY ONE FEAR—TO FAIL IN THEIR DUTY AND THEIR HONOR."

3.—The Town Executive: Liége, Valiant as Ever

In 1878, Walt Whitman, already impressed by the "great seething, oceanic populations" of New York and Brooklyn, expressed the hope that one day ("will not the time hasten") these two cities would be municipally united. His wish was fulfilled 20 years later.

In Belgium every public-minded citizen of the larger

metropolitan areas has had a similar desire for many years. The "man in the street" of Brussels wanted to annex at least a dozen suburbs which crowd in on the capital. The people of Antwerp strongly objected to paying heavy taxes for their magnificent port or their wide educational facilities by which the 200,000 people of Berchem, Borgerhout and other places profited materially and intellectually. In Ghent an identical situation prevailed, and in Liége the town council used to cast envious glances at Seraing and Jemeppe-sur-Meuse. Practically everywhere before the German invasion, the fight was on to do away with the backward traces of rural economy which hampered the growth of the mother city and created serious injustice to both metropolis and suburbs.

Respectful of municipal autonomy to the point of mania, the Belgian Constitution stipulated that the annexation of a small town by a larger one or the fusion of communities could be effected only by an act of Parliament. And so, since Parliament does not convene under Nazi rule, the inhabitants of the principal Belgian towns had to postpone their campaign for fusion with their suburbs for the duration.

German policy in Belgium, however, is based on what one might call the principle of catering to suppressed desires. With Mephistophelian cleverness the Germans seize upon every debatable issue of peacetime Belgium, the solution of which has been slowed up by the inherent easy tempo of democratic institutions. They force a solution on the Belgian people, and then sit back and wait for gratitude and applause.

However, the Belgians know their classics and remember the Trojan hero who feared the Greeks even bearing

gifts. For the Belgians it is a matter of principle. According to The Hague Convention the occupying power may not alter the laws of a country as long as the "occupation" lasts. No peace, no armistice having been signed between Germany and Belgium, it is imperative that what must be decided by Parliamentary vote should not be "ordered" by the Nazis. Whosoever accepts such an "order" implicitly accepts the conquest of his country and discards all idea of Belgium's independence. Discussions on the illegal character of Nazi interference in Belgian administration may seem far-fetched and of little importance to the common man—a mere lawyer's oratorical game! After all, some of the imposed measures seem very sensible. But even the common man feels that there must be a catch to this Nazi solicitude. He remembers that when the Nazis marched into Brussels, Antwerp and Liége, they told the mayors of those towns that they would be held responsible for peace and order in all the suburbs, thus giving them an authority they had not previously enjoyed and to which they had no right.

After all, the German idea is simple: it is preferable to deal with one stubborn mayor than with twelve or eighteen. To give a legal aspect to this policy, they had their prize Quisling, the Secretary-General of the Interior, appoint a commissioner for the municipalities and their suburbs, one Mr. H. Borginon. This man was to dismiss the suburban mayors and councils and effect the fusion of the suburbs into the mother cities. He would perform on his own authority what in peacetime was the task of Parliament.

In Antwerp Mr. Borginon had an easy job, but in Brussels the acting mayor, Mr. Coelst, told the "Commis-

sioner" that he was too busy to see him. Of the 18 Brussels suburbs only one mayor agreed to see the "Commissioner." But in the meantime, the Flemish-Nationalist Mr. Borginon, assisted by a Walloon henchman, tackled Liége.

It is extremely difficult to make the people of Liége do anything they don't want to. They have for centuries been engaged in the firearms industry and in mining; their temperament is rather explosive. Liége enjoys, if we may say so, a southern exposure, and Belgians are used to consider the Liégeois as the Marseillais of their country, as far as the intensity of their feelings and the readiness to express them is concerned. Theirs is a charming city, beautified by the Meuse River, and reminiscent of Lyons in France. It is located at the crossroads of France, Holland and Germany, and its history has always been eventful and at times glorious and terrible.

Soon after the invasion, the Germans and their Quisling friends in Liége told the Liégeois a strange tale. Your language, they said, may be French, but your dialect is popular Latin. Your spiritual kinship with the French people is just an error. You are decidedly Germans. Thus the Nazis spoke to the people of the Liége fortress which had so magnificently resisted in 1914, to people whose fathers and relatives they had executed or massacred in the other war.

When Mr. Borginon thought it was about time to get busy on the creation of a Greater Liége, he wrote a nice letter to Mr. Bologne, acting mayor of the town, telling him he was ready to accomplish Liége's most ardent desires of territorial aggrandizement.

Mr. Bologne instantly replied: "During 42 years of public office, during 32 years in Parliament, I have more

than twenty times sworn fidelity to the constitution and to the laws of the Belgian people. I shall remain faithful to my oath. . . .

"I declare most emphatically that I will not collaborate in the realization of a project which would not take into consideration the present organization, the present boundaries of the suburbs and the maintenance of all the suburban administrations."

There followed a reply from Mr. Borginon based on every kind of pseudo-juridical Quislingesque reasoning. The Liége mayor would not give in. He again stated his case, which is the case of Belgium, occupied but unvanquished.

Commenting on this correspondence, the underground newspaper *La Voix des Belges* [*Voice of the Belgians*] says:

"There is no doubt that a Greater Liége will be realized notwithstanding Mr. Bologne's opposition, for the Borginons and the Romsées base their authority on the brutal force of the occupant. But it will be done without Mr. Bologne, without the Liége aldermen. That is essential."

An incident like the one related here, is a sufficient reason for the Germans to dismiss or imprison a mayor. His gesture may lack the heroics of battle, but it rests on the standards of civic virtue in which the history of Belgium abounds. It is worthy of the Liége of General Leman, of the Liége every Belgian knows and loves for being a little bit "cocardier," a little headstrong, the Liége that believes in the axiom: "Périsse le monde plutôt qu'un principe." Let the world perish rather than a principle.

In the allied countries the major catastrophe would be a loss of faith. In an occupied country the main danger

is compromise. Those who frankly denounce it are a comfort not only to their countrymen, but to the world at large.

4.—The Clergy: "With Scorpions"

IN THE 18TH CENTURY BELGIUM WAS UNDER THE RULE of Austria. The Austrian Imperial House had a slogan whose first letters made the following strange combination:

A. E. I. O. U.

This collection of vowels stood for "Austriae est imperare orbi universo," a forerunner of "Deutschland ueber Alles," which meant that Austria should rule the entire universe, the whole show from North to South, from East to West. It ruled however but a small part of it and at that it did a poor job resulting, among other things, in the first Belgian revolution.

The Emperor was Joseph II, an "enlightened tyrant." He picked up some "modern" ideas from the French philosophers and tried to apply them through energetic reforms. He "rationalized" and "coordinated" a number of

habits and customs in a country bent on particularisms and perennial traditions. But things got completely out of hand when he went to work on the Catholic Church. He tried to regulate the most minute details of the church ceremonial. He told the priests how many candles they could light on the altar and how big these candles should be. The Belgians immediately found a nickname for their meddlesome emperor. They called him the Sexton.

The latest news from Belgium proves that the German commander, von Falkenhausen, is envious of Joseph II's laurels. His relations with the Catholic clergy are getting worse every day and his intervention in church affairs more detailed. He must be a poor student of history; Adolf his master forgot that the Russians have a winter, but von Falkenhausen seems to have forgotten that no good comes from attacking the church, any church. You can't get the better of people whose interests are on the other side of the grave. You can't annihilate an organization that counts on all ages to come to justify its actions or its stand. Every statesman knows that, and even the most cynical of them feel satisfied with a decent compromise. That is why Benito Mussolini adopted this attitude. The French have an axiom for it. They say: "Qui mange du Pape, en crève." He who tries to swallow the Pope, strangles.

But it looks as if von Falkenhausen is not unlike the celebrated pelican, whose beak could "hold more than his belly can." His decrees are severe and exacting, but the question is will he be able to enforce them? His public enemy No. 1 is the Belgian Cardinal Van Roey, a soft-spoken man when he speaks, but in general so silent that he enjoys in Belgium the same reputation Calvin Coolidge had in the United States.

But when the Cardinal had an occasion to speak to larger audiences he told them that the Nazi philosophy was the filthiest perversion of the mind the world has yet known. When the Nazis maltreated the Jews, the Cardinal intervened, in vain, and when the Nazis ordered the miners to work on Sunday, the Cardinal remarked that, in peacetime, Belgium produced coal in abundance while, under occupation, Belgians had to go without fuel. Except for exactly half a dozen deluded priests, the Belgian clergy lived up to the example set by the Cardinal.

The first open conflict with the Nazis occurred when some of the Belgian Fascists who had joined the Russian campaign died at the front. According to their fuehrers they fell to save "civilization and Christianity." So their friends decided to organize church services for them with flags and party ceremonials which would have implied the approval or collaboration of the church authorities. The priests, instructed by the Cardinal, refused any collaboration. When the Rexists and Nationalists marched into the parish churches with their standards, uniforms and party emblems, the officiating priests discontinued the service and the Fascists had to send for a German Army chaplain to finish it.

Incidents of that kind happened in scores of villages. No Belgian priest was found to celebrate mass for those who fell in the service of the enemy.

In his speech on May 10, the second anniversary of the invasion of Belgium, Reeder, the president of the military administration in Belgium, alluded to these incidents and threatened the population and the clergy, warning them that this had to stop. Apparently he has found an occasion for applying his threats and taking petty vengeance on the

Catholic clergy. He discovered that whenever a patriot dies in a concentration camp, whenever a saboteur is executed by the Nazis, whenever a Belgian dies for his country, the church overflows with people, the national anthem is played and the occasion becomes a demonstration which encourages patriotism and the people's faith in their national destiny. He knows how much people value these all-too-frequent occasions to pray for a patriot's soul. It takes away some of the horror when the relatives of those murdered by Reeder's henchmen receive the ashes of their father or husband sent home in a package. His superior, von Falkenhausen, therefore issued the following order:

"The Clergy must restrict itself to saying Low Mass for the repose of the soul of each executed man.

"This Mass may be celebrated in the parish church only. Catafalques are not allowed, and it is forbidden to conclude the Mass by the absolution of the death.

"Notice of the date and hour of the funeral service must be given to the German administration.

"Only the closest relatives of the executed person, not exceeding 20 in number, may attend. No delegations are allowed to be present. The Germans, in uniform or plain clothes, who exercise supervision during the ceremony are not included in the maximum number of persons to be admitted. All decoration of the church is forbidden."

It will be interesting to see how von Falkenhausen is going to enforce this regulation à la Joseph II. This monument of hateful stupidity and baseness will long survive his stay in Belgium. For even the most barbarous tribes let their enemies bury their dead in peace and quiet. Adding insult to injury, von Falkenhausen also ordered that the Belgians executed for patriotic action must be buried in a

special lot which the ordinance calls the "traitors' cemetery."

Allied peoples are told that their martyrs will be avenged. After the last war Lloyd George was going to hang the Kaiser. Wilhelm II died of old age twenty-odd years later. The German officers who had massacred the people of Dinant and Louvain in 1914 came back in 1925 as tourists. We are a little skeptical therefore and we wait for the statesman who, in the presence of the horrors perpetrated by the Axis all over the world, will make his own the words of the Bible (1 Kings XII, 14) and tell the criminals:

"My father hath chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

5.—The Industrialist: Muzzling the Movies

To make a detailed study of German activities in the occupied countries of Europe is very much like "taking a trip down the sewer in a glass-bottomed boat." Its revelations, however, are not lacking in interest, since they expose the fact that everything the Germans do in the conquered countries appeals with infallible certainty and ac-

curacy to the basest instincts of man and finds its response among the moral and intellectual scum of the population.

An excellent illustration of this fact may be found in a study of the policies applied by the Germans to the film distributing agencies in Belgium. Let us take a brief tour through Nazi-controlled Belgian movieland and see some of its amazing sights.

Before the invasion there was a strong move in Belgium, a country of complete economic and commercial liberty, called anarchy by some, to put into effect a very mild corporative system which would do away with a few of the evils of unbridled competition. The problem had been carefully studied, and bills based on the democratic spirit of the country were either under discussion or scheduled to come up in Parliament. When the Nazis took over, one of the first things they told the Belgian industrialists was: "We are going to give you exactly what you want. We are organizing a corporative system of industry. Say thank you, please!"

Since nobody was allowed to manufacture or engage in any commercial or professional activity unless he belonged to a corporation, these corporations were easily organized and immediately became a commodious means for the Germans to convey their orders to Belgian professional groups.

There were in Belgium about one thousand people engaged in the distribution of films and the management of movie theaters. Their organization was rather loose except for half a dozen less reputable characters (some of whom had already been brought into court on one charge or another) who, feeling their situation on the market a little weak, had clustered together and formed an associa-

tion. They had little standing among their colleagues, but their joint interests gave them at least some influence. In August 1940, they became collaborationists and, without consulting their colleagues, transformed their association into the Board of Directors of the Movie Industry Corporation, with the blessings of the German Commander. Their new position gave them the right to grant or refuse an operating permit to some of the coerced members of the group, as well as to close the theaters operated by those people who did not live up to the policies dictated by the six-man board.

The first action the board took was of a purely political nature and intended to please the Nazis. Operating permits were taken away from all Jews and from all theaters managed by British, American or French capital. Furthermore, theaters which did not belong in these categories, but which had run films like *The Lion Has Wings* (British war film) or *The Confessions of a Nazi Spy* were treated in the same way. As a sideline the Nazi board, for various specious reasons, closed the theaters which were in the same neighborhood as those they themselves owned. No other excuse was given for closing the Scala Theater in Brussels which stood next to the Eldorado, taken over by a German group.

Sometimes the closing of a movie house could be avoided by paying heavy graft to members of the board. In many other cases, the board maneuvered so as to induce the theater owner to sell his building to a German group under the threat of closing down his theater on some other easily-manufactured pretext.

A typical example of these tactics is the following. In a Brussels suburb a theater belonged to two men, a Jew and

an "Aryan." The Corporation, therefore, ordered the closing of the business. The "Aryan" partner demanded the dissolution of the corporation which was granted by the court. A liquidator was appointed to put the building up for sale. Bids were made, and the building was allotted to the highest bidder, but the transaction still had to be approved by the Germans. This approval was apparently not forthcoming, for the next day by order of the Oberfeldkommandantur the building was sold to the lowest bidder, the former "Aryan" co-owner of the theater. He had become a collaborationist the day before.

Of course, the UFA newsreels are shown in every theater as a compulsory part of the program. All British and American films in reserve have been banned. When the Germans discovered that the public preferred the old French films to the German production, those films were forbidden too, and the recent French films are shown first in the theaters which belong entirely to German capital.

A more elaborate example of favoring the pro-German element is the following: before the war a lawsuit was going on between the Association of Authors, Composers and Music Publishers—SACEM—and the theater owners. SACEM demanded not only an initial payment for music used in a film, but subsequent royalties each time that film was shown. Some of the theater owners had been paying SACEM these royalties, some had deposited the sum claimed by SACEM in a blocked account until the day the court would render its decision, and finally some had purely and simply refused to pay anything whatsoever. To that last category belonged the present members of the board of the Corporation. In 1941 the courts decided in favor of SACEM. So the board members had to pay con-

siderable sums due on the use of films during four or five years. Their personal interests being involved, they immediately went to work and negotiated with SACEM, concluding an arrangement by which a lump sum of 1,750,000 francs would cover the total arrears of all the movie houses of Belgium. This sum will be paid, however, through a tax of one-half per cent on the gross receipts of all the movies, without any distinctions being made between those who had already paid and those who had not, the blocked accounts being already turned over to SACEM. Thus the board members have their huge debts paid by all the members of the Corporation and the members who had lived up to the ruling of SACEM pay twice.

Some naive theater owners started a lawsuit against the Corporation. They were told that unless they withdrew their complaints, action would be taken, their houses closed and, in any case, the Corporation statutes forbade its members to sue it.

As in all other fields, German rule in the theater business means brutality, obscene greed and favoritism to the profit of people who before the invasion were the shame of their profession.

6.—*The Judiciary: Judges on Strike*

IT SOUNDS LIKE THE TITLE OF A JOKE—"JUDGES ON Strike." For in no civilized country in the world can these two words be associated without the implication that their juxtaposition is based only on a misunderstanding or on an intentional word-play. Indeed, the last thing a man should be denied in this world is justice, and it is evident that never should a judge have the right to refuse his ministry when people's lives or interests are at stake.

Among the few things every decent man respects is the authority and the dignity of the judge. In the United States, judges are elected. Europeans generally feel that electioneering for an office that is supposed to administer the law equally to friend or enemy is objectionable. It has to be explained to them that this strange custom is a remnant of frontier days when the citizens of lawless, growing towns chose to designate from among themselves a righteous non-partisan man. In Belgium, as in most other European countries, the judges of all courts are appointed from among the barristers. Those who apply for these positions know that they'll never get rich. Their career

will be, externally at least, uneventful. Some may eventually be appointed Governor of a province, but the majority will spend their lives in the serene atmosphere of law. Their ambition will coincide with the aim of justice itself. Their satisfaction they must find in their own integrity, in their constant contact with the very spirit of the community as laid down in their country's laws. Most of them belong to the real aristocracy of the fatherland, the aristocracy of the mind. Very seldom will their names be in the limelight. They are, in the life of the nation, the modest and silent guardians of the national spirit. Only in times of national danger will one see the flash of their sword in an obscured world.

According to The Hague Convention, the judiciary of a country under foreign occupation is supposed to carry on the application of its country's laws. As for temporary legislation introduced by the occupant, the courts are supposed to recognize, or at least not to oppose, those measures which are taken in order to prevent disorder or confusion in the occupied territory. As long as the war has not come to an end, and the status of the occupied country is not determined, the occupant must abstain from changing the national laws and especially from attacking the country's unity or morale.

More than ever in the absence of Parliament and of the legal government the judiciary must protect the nation's spiritual substance. In the last World War the Belgian courts proved their mettle. On January 19, 1918, a separatist movement, protected by the Germans, proclaimed the autonomy of the Flemish provinces. The High Court ordered the immediate arrest of the political leaders who, by this proclamation, endangered the safety and the unity

of the state. The Germans immediately intervened, freed their protegés and sent the responsible magistrates to jail. As a protest, the entire Belgian judiciary went on strike.

Since the surrender of the Belgian Army on May 28, 1940, many minor conflicts have arisen between the Germans and the Belgian courts. Most of them have had, up to now, an amusing aspect. There was often a note of comic effrontery about them as, for instance, in the incident of the Churchill poster. Accusing the British of responsibility for the famine in Belgium, the Nazis published a poster representing Churchill as a fat ogre starving Belgian children. The laws of the country forbid public insults to the heads of foreign nations with whom the Belgian Government entertains diplomatic relations. On the basis of this law, a Belgian judge put the printer of this poster on trial. The Germans, of course, stopped this "nonsense" in time.

Another instance was the episode of the farm licenses. Still another had to do with the larger municipalities. At least five or six urban centers in the country developed very rapidly in the last few decades. The result was that every large city, like Brussels, Antwerp, Liége or Ghent was surrounded and, one may well say, sometimes choked, by a number of suburbs which were independent rural communities thirty years ago, but whose existence as administrative entities was no longer justified. The Germans who already had suppressed every town council in the 2,600 Belgian communities had been considerably annoyed by the resistance of the local mayors. They organized Greater Brussels, Greater Antwerp, Greater Liége, Greater Ghent, Greater Charleroi, etc. The sole

object of these measures being to eliminate resistance and to make control easier for them.

Officials of local administrations refused to hand over their books or their funds, and all kinds of incidents sprang up. One of them resulted in a lawsuit before the Antwerp court, which later was appealed to Brussels. A group of citizens contested the legality of a Greater Antwerp. The appellate court was about to hand down a decision in their favor when the Germans requested that the judgment be deferred for two months. They were playing for time. The three judges in charge of the case refused to defer their decision and were arrested.

Once again the members of the Supreme Court, of all the civil and criminal courts met and decided to protest by walking out on their jobs. For the second time in 25 years, Belgian courts went on strike. Their purpose was to make it clear to the Germans that justice is one of the basic ideals to which a desperate humanity has clung ever since the dawn of civilization, one of those ideals for which millions of men in all climes have died so that people may remember that basic truth—that justice is above all men.

It will be to the eternal shame of the Nazis that they have for ten years impressed upon the German people—alas too willing to believe it—that there is no such thing as general justice, that there is only "German" justice and that justice is that which profits the Reich and its leaders.

The silent and empty courtrooms of Belgium acquired a new majesty. For some time, dust fell on the benches, on the unused ermine capes of the supreme court justices, on the humble premises of the justices of the peace. The book of Belgian law was closed, the reign of the Beast had begun.

7.—*The Street Car Man:*
In Praise of the Street Car Conductor

UNLIKE THE AMERICAN SUBWAYS, WHICH, ALL OTHER evidence lacking, must be considered a fair proof of the Devil's evil works in this world, the Belgian streetcars are peaceful vehicles which allow what the books on etiquette call "a constant flow of gracious conversation." At present they move more slowly than ever along the thoroughfares, almost as deserted as Wall Street on Sunday afternoon. The Germans have reduced the electric current, clamped down on the grease and oil supply, and lately they tried to force the Brussels Streetcar Company to send a thousand members of their personnel to Germany in order to run the tramways through the picturesque ruins of Düsseldorf.

As the company refused, the Nazis stopped traffic between 10 P.M. and 7 A.M., thus throwing a thousand men out of work and compelling them to find jobs in Germany. As further reprisal for the company's attitude they sent the manager, Mr. Van der Speck, to jail.

The Brussels streetcars are manned by a driver and a

conductor. The driver is a professional never-spoken-to, mute and morose individual, who expresses his temperament and his temper by fierce bell ringing and by an occasional cuss word which does not call for a reply. But inside the car there is the conductor. He is a figure of social prominence and importance. As a rule he is rude and abrupt toward the male of the species, gallant and kind to the ladies. He pushes the latter inside the car with a gentle pat on the back, efficient without undue familiarity, and even a Grand-Duchess could not object when he affectionately calls her, in a truly Belgian mixture of Flemish and French, "Madameke," which could be approximately translated as "My dear little lady."

The streetcar conductor is a very well-informed man. He meets the office girl as well as the Prime Minister. He reads a lot over the shoulders of the people in the car, and he follows details of ministerial crises by listening to the talk of the gentlemen who ride home for lunch and supper. Needless to say he is a philosopher, and when he voices his opinion it sounds like the chorus of an antique tragedy. He is the natural spokesman, the normal expression of public opinion against the government and the weather, the two most important topics of conversation in peacetime Belgium.

Since the occupation, however, his domain has become far more important. It has been transformed by circumstances into a kind of no-man's land. As much as possible the Belgians avoid meeting the Nazis in cafés and restaurants. About the only place where they are compelled to be near them is in the streetcars, but this association with the Nazis is only temporary, and occasions of relieving this proximity are easy to find. So the streetcar has become

the preferential demonstration ground of Belgian opposition to the Nazi régime. A great number of stories go the rounds about the Nazis being snubbed or laughed at by the streetcar public. There is the smart little girl who hears a German officer asking for the correct time, and who, without looking at her watch, says that it is exactly 9 o'clock.—"How do you know?" asks the officer.—"Don't you see that there is nobody in the streets?" she replies. "Everybody is listening to the B.B.C. at 9 o'clock." There is also the story of another little girl who, receiving a piece of candy from a German officer, is told by her mother to thank him, and who complies by saying: "Thank you, dirty Hun."

The New Order has changed even the aspect of the streetcars. The back platform is reserved for the Jews and inside a number of seats are reserved for the Wehrmacht. Anyone else taking these seats, has to pay a fine of ten francs (approximately 30 cents).

The Nazi newspapers, always on the alert to find a new proof of pro-allied feeling, have finally discovered that the streetcar conductors are a menace to the New Order. The *SS Man,* organ of the German Black Brigade, accuses them in its issue of July 11th in the following terms: "Eighty per cent of the tram conductors are pro-British. Perhaps they have become pro-British because of what they hear on the trams, because they have not enough coins to make change, or for other reasons. Everyone knows that certain seats are reserved for the Wehrmacht, but the public on the Brussels-Antwerp line shows its insolent attitude by occupying the seats reserved for soldiers. This means a victory for the Anglophiles and usually the conductor does not even impose the ten-franc fine."

On the 21st of July, Belgian Independence Day, the Nazi commanders in Brussels and in other Belgian cities issued orders prohibiting all demonstrations at Allied monuments commemorating the last war. But the Belgian public invented a way to disrupt the Nazi order. They traveled in the streetcars which passed by the Allied monuments and threw wreaths and flowers from the windows. The streetcar motormen slowed up at each memorial, and the people inside the cars stood at attention during these unauthorized ceremonies.

For the moment, the Belgian streetcar is really "le dernier salon où l'on cause" (The only drawing room left where good conversation is heard). It is a pleasure to read the confession of the Nazis that in this drawing room all the talking is against them.

8.—*The Policeman: The Policeman Breaks the Law*

A POPULAR TUNE IN BELGIUM GAILY SINGS THAT COPS are people, in fact very nice people. "Les agents sont de braves gens." When the burgomaster addresses them at his New Year's reception, he calls them "the guardians of

order." It sounds well, and it helps them a lot. They think of it on their beats during the normal 275 rainy days of the year, and even if their feet are wet, this noble definition of their task in life keeps at least their hearts warm.

In ancient Rome, the policemen were recruited from among the Scythians, husky barbarians of the north. If we are well-informed—and who would be impertinent enough to doubt it—the police force of New York has its roots in a green and distant island. In fact, it looks as if policemen are seldom recruited from the locality whose people they are to protect. In Belgium most of them are country boys, farmers' sons, who were fed up with milk and manure, crops and cattle. In large rural families it is not unusual for one of the sons to leave the farm and go to the city. Lacking a technical skill, he usually tries to join the police force, and if he succeeds, he is likely to become the pride of his family, for he will acquaint himself with city manners and the refined tastes of an urban community. Coming home to the local Kermesse after a few years, he will look like a squire—and he will even act a little like one.

The rôle of policemen all over the world must be approximately the same. Of course, in Belgium they seldom have the really good shootings in the streets and night clubs which make such wonderful stories for movies. But the Belgian policemen have their troubles like any other of their colleagues. Their primary offense was called, in official language, "useless talks with citizens," these citizens being mostly ladies. It is, of course, difficult to define when a talk ceases to be useful, or when it begins to be necessary. But the captains of the police force had no philosophical hesitations when it came to distinguishing use-

ful conversations from idle talk, and the first thing a Belgian cop had to learn was that he must be a strong but silent man. However, nobody could prevent his being a thirsty man, and that was his second temptation.

He withstood his trials fairly well, and as a rule he was wise enough to succumb with moderation to the temptations on his beat, thus showing the citizenry that, although the guardian of order, the servant of a majestic and remote ideal, he was after all human—a cop but still a man.

The main reason for this personal touch in the attitude of the local Belgian policeman was that each city controlled its police force independently of the state, and that each city organized, paid and clothed its law force according to its own taste. In some towns policemen wore helmets wrought in a grandiose and military manner; in others, they looked like porters in a moderately priced hotel; and everywhere they were either sloppy or neat according to the ideas of the city fathers.

The German occupation put them, as it did many other officials, in a difficult spot. They were the first group the Nazis appealed to for help in restoring or maintaining order in the conquered land. There was nothing objectionable in regulating traffic or in telling people to observe the blackout, but the time came when German rules and regulations began to attack the core of the fatherland, the very spirit of the country and its basic institutions. Immediately a number of minor incidents occurred which resulted in the dismissal of the police commissioners in most of the big towns. The police refused to enforce the Verbotens in which they did not believe. They closed their eyes or walked to another street when something happened of which theoretically they should disapprove, but which se-

cretly rejoiced their patriotic hearts. The Germans could, to a certain extent at least, understand this attitude. They had their own police, their Feldgendarmerie and their Gestapo, and they systematically mistrusted the Belgian police force. When they discovered that they could not induce the Belgians to take over part of their dirty work, they resorted to their choice Quisling, the Secretary-General of the Interior. This man ruled that in the future policemen were no longer to be appointed by the local mayor, but by himself. He created a police school, and only those who graduated from that Nazi institution would be acceptable as policemen. When the great wave of sabotage and attacks on Nazis and Quislings broke over Belgium, the Nazi newspapers accused the police of weakness and laxity. One of them wrote: "The Belgian police are deaf and blind whenever they have to deal with political crimes. No one is punished." Another wrote: "When the crimes are political, the police know nothing, find nothing. And if they should find anything, they know very well that the first acts of the court would be to release the guilty parties," although, the same paper says, "the Belgian police have the reputation of being one of the best police forces in the world, and Belgium is the country with the fewest unpunished crimes."

Recently, more police officers have been summarily dismissed from their posts for refusal to cooperate with the Nazis. At Ostend, Police Commissioner Beauprez was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for "anti-German utterances and for disturbing the peace." At Salzinnes, near Namur, a "V" sign was repeatedly found painted on a bridge. The Nazis ordered the police to watch carefully and apprehend the culprit. After weeks of watching, with

no results reported, the Nazis secretly sent one of their own men to hide and watch at the same time. The culprit turned out to be a Salzinnes policeman. In Brussels, Chief Inspector Jules Liénart was executed in June of last year, charged with "illegal possession of firearms and cooperation in the distribution of secret newspapers."

Many more stories have been published about policemen who have been only a few steps from scenes of crimes, sabotage and violation of Nazi premises, and who have sworn before their Nazi superiors that they heard and saw nothing. Several of them have been executed for their patriotic behavior. We know the names of Liénart and Kenieur. All of them have been threatened by the Nazis as well as by the Quislings. In their desperate attempt to check the Belgian spirit of active resistance, the Germans have announced that they want to recruit 700 policemen in Charleroi which had only 60 before, 400 more in Ghent and in Antwerp and 200 in Liége. In all, in 39 towns the police force is to be increased or doubled.

The German Administrator Reeder recently posted an ordinance in Brussels stating that "the gendarmerie and police must themselves eliminate from their ranks those who will not submit to the occupying power. The hostages taken will pay with their lives for any acts committed by members of the gendarmerie or police force against the security of the German Army."

Like all other Belgians at odds with the German machine, the policemen do their duty to the fullest extent. If necessary they become heroes and give their lives for their country, but in less dramatic circumstances they also remain true to themselves. For instance, there is humor and bravery in the sly comment one of them made to the in-

dignant Quisling who came in to complain about the patriots who drew skulls on his friends' doors at night. "People who do that are stupid," said the furious Quisling. "Sure," said the officer, "sure they are; perhaps we ought to make a note of the addresses of houses where incidents of that sort occur . . . They may be useful after the war."

This took place in Schooten, a small rural village north of Antwerp. The police precinct was a dull, cramped place. The officer was a humble, blunt fellow, performing a modest and thankless task. Nobody asked him to be a hero, but he couldn't help being a wit. He knew that his countrymen were speaking up bravely in the free world—some in Spitfires, some on the sea in ships, some by fighting in the Ethiopian jungle to prove to the world that Belgium has not died. The officer in Schooten could not refrain from slapping the Quisling's face with his cool, ironical remark. It was his cry for justice, and we know that even when men are silenced, the very stones will cry out for this most precious gift of Heaven.

9.—The School Teacher: Mr. Chips Refuses a Raise

IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT SINCE THERE ARE SO many common people, the Lord must have loved them,

otherwise He wouldn't have gone to all the trouble of multiplying them. Nobody will feel insulted if we classify the schoolmaster among the common people. First of all, there are a great many of them, and second, their task is a humble, unpretentious one. However, since nationalism began to rage in Europe and, to a certain extent, elsewhere, the schoolmaster has often been endowed with a patriotic halo; more often he has been held responsible for the weaknesses and the faults of the nation. When the Prussians defeated the Austrians at Sadowa, it was declared that the Prussian schoolmaster had beaten his Austrian colleague. But who would wonder at that? Can one, indeed, imagine any creature as peaceloving, as *gemütlich* and cordial, as an Austrian school teacher?

The Greeks and the Romans who long ago said everything worth while under the sun (we write nothing but a delayed echo of their wisdom), discovered the drama in the schoolmaster's life; they went, as they always did, to the core of the problem. We "moderns" most of the time play around the surface, in more or less graceful caprioles. Juvenal said in his *Satires* that "it is repetition, like cabbage served at every meal, that wears out the schoolmaster's life."

In Belgium, this was as much the case as anywhere else, but an additional trial was that the schoolmaster was not very well paid, and that altogether he had a rather mediocre job. In the cities he belonged to the white collar class, but in smaller communities, in the delightful Walloon and Flemish villages, he was often quite a personage. He might be a Mr. Chips, but he didn't necessarily have to be, for in most cases his extracurricular activities made him a man of standing and sometimes even of influence. In the

rural districts he was active in the organization of the farmers. He was often their adviser and their scribe. He was a good newspaper reader and his interest in cultural matters was lively. He would organize lectures on literary and artistic subjects and attract well-known authors to his obscure village and make them enjoy it. He would study local history and prove that his one horse town had once been the navel of the universe. In summertime he would guide the gay, young people of the village through the woods to some remote glade where their forefathers had prayed to pagan gods or buried their flint weapons. He would be as busy as a bee and as unpretentious as a daisy. It might happen that once in a while a great man would render homage to him in public and tell the world that his pedagogue had really "made" him. That consoled the schoolmaster for all the trouble he had gone through to give his sons a college education and, incidentally, for the fact that at least one of them had become a perfect pedantic little stinker.

Being underpaid, the schoolmasters in the big cities were an easy prey to "subversive" ideas, a subversive idea being one that displeases somebody else. They could be swayed by "new" ideas far more easily than any other class of society. They were typical of that discontented middle class that brought Mr. Schickelgruber and his pals to power. One might have expected, after the collapse of France, when the twilight of the European gods was being fanfared over the whole earth, when millions of people became political desperados, that some of these humble and underprivileged people would have given in to the temptation of the German "flesh pots" and turned Nazi.

No such thing has happened in Belgium. The Belgian

schoolmaster stood his ground because he kept faith with his own people. The Germans ordered him to tear out of his history books the pages which told about the first World War. Of course, he had to do it, but could he tear them out of his heart and memory? The Germans gave him a wonderful poster representing a grimacing Churchill hovering over starving Belgian children and the caption read, "You, monster, are doing this to us." He had to tack it on the wall, but who should be punished if with two pencil strokes the head of Churchill was transformed into that of the fascinating Adolf himself? He had trouble enough, caring for the half a dozen children who used to faint in his classroom every morning through lack of food.

He kept going. He told his children that their country was a good country, that over 70,000 of their soldiers were still prisoners in *Stalags* and *Oflags,* that the lamb is not the aggressor, but that the wolf is, that the basis of social life is justice, and that every crime receives its ultimate punishment. Then he taught his class the national anthem, and all the people passing by smiled happily and hopefully, except the Quisling of the village. He (the Quisling) raged in his newspaper that the school system should be turned over to his friends. "We want the power in order to put it at the disposal of the child which is the fruit and the seed of the blood. The schoolmasters want exactly the opposite. They wish to put the blood and the fertility of the child at the disposal of their political party, to increase not only their political and spiritual power, but also their financial interests." (*De S.S. Man,* February 6, 1943.) He also wrote that "Teachers who feel safe behind the walls of the schools, pursue their political game. Openly or covertly, they continue to make propaganda for

the return of the Pierlot government and to say spiteful things against Germany and National-Socialism. Why are no severer measures taken against these agitators who systematically increase the hatred of Germany and National-Socialism?" (*Volk en Staat,* Antwerp, July 7, 1942.) But the Germans who sometimes take facts into consideration did not turn over the power to the Quislings. They knew the situation. They had only to listen to their own Nazi-controlled radio over which at the end of the same month, a notorious Quisling teacher made the following confession. "Just imagine," he said, "that out of the 20 or 30 youngsters in my class there were not more than two with whom I could do anything. I don't speak about intelligence, work or study. I merely refer to comprehension, to the aptitude of certain of them to grasp the scope of the events we are witnessing. The results are discouraging. When you dare draw the attention of the pupils to the destiny, the future, of our people they give you a hateful glance. In their opinion, you're a traitor, in any case a person to be hanged at the first opportunity, and many will be ready to help."

The Nazis have ousted the former city governments and illegally replaced them by their friends. In order to gain some popularity with the citizens, the Brussels Nazi mayor decided to give a 40 per cent raise to all schoolteachers, which means for the Belgian capital an expenditure of ten million francs (pre-war, $350,000). The schoolteachers would have had good reason to accept this liberality. The prices of the black market are such that no schoolteacher's salary can cope with them. It might have been welcome news, but there was a catch to it. The "authorities" who made the gift had been appointed by

the Nazis, after the elected city council, aldermen and mayor had been brutally expelled. From the hand of these people no gift could be accepted. The Catholic teachers were warned by their ecclesiastical superiors; the official teachers did not need the example of their colleagues. Forced to be in closer contact with the Quisling masters they had already understood the generous "gesture." And so, in the year of grace 1943, it came to pass that hundreds of schoolteachers in Belgium's capital refused a 40 per cent raise in their meager salary for no other reason than that they did not want to say "thank you" to people they expect to hang as soon as the tide of the Allied victory permits.

10.—The Railroad Man: "You Can Do More Than the R.A.F."

THE VIGOROUS AND ENTERPRISING SPIRIT OF THE BELgians of the last century has perhaps never been better illustrated than by their decision, taken as early as 1832, to organize an extensive railroad system in their country. At that time there were no railroads on the continent, and

quite a number of people were strongly opposed to this extravagant and dangerous novelty. Stern defenders of agricultural interests claimed that the smoke from the engines would ruin the cultivated land; distinguished economists—they always are distinguished—held that the steel supply would rapidly be exhausted by the demands of the railroads; and, in the course of the discussion, an engineer made the astonishing statement that "the railroad is an absurdity from the artistic standpoint, and foolish from the commercial and diplomatic point of view."

But, since Balthazar Gracian had already found out in the 17th century that "the virtue of the Belgians is patience," they let these divagations go by and calmly went about the business of building the first railroad on the continent.

The first run, between Brussels and Mechlin, was inaugurated the 1st of May, 1835. Five years later, the Belgian railroad system had a far more extensive network of rails than Austria-Hungary: it was 12 times longer than the Russian railroad and 42 times longer than the Italian. In 1940, in a country only 120 miles wide at its broadest point, there were about 3,200 miles of railroad, nearly 100,000 railway employees and a yearly transport of about 200,000,000 passengers.

When the Germans attacked Belgium in 1940, the railroad situation inside Germany was one of the weak points of their economy. It is reported that just before the war broke out, they even had tried to rent railroad material outside of Germany. Although it cannot be established with certainty, it seems that in their *Blitzkrieg* they systematically spared the Belgian railroad system; out of the 3,200 miles of track they damaged only 85 miles, but, at

the same time, they destroyed 600 stations in order to disorganize traffic.

One of the first measures of the *Wehrmachtsverkehrsdirection* (Military Direction of Communications) in Belgium was to seize a good proportion of the rolling stock for German use. When the Russian campaign developed, demands on Belgian railroads increased so tremendously that the Nazis drained the country of all but 1,800 out of 4,200 locomotives, and left only 40,000 out of 120,000 coaches. In October 1942, there were still 8,078 freight cars for civilian use. In December of the same year, there were only 6,209 of them left. Since Belgian economy depends to a great extent on railroad transportation, the ever-increasing demands of the Germans disorganized economic life to such degree that at a certain point they promised to build 200 barges to be used on rivers and canals in order to take some of the burden from the railroads. In the meantime, more than 50 per cent of the Belgian barges had been requisitioned.

A series of German decrees were issued in an effort to prevent the railroad material from standing idle. Shippers or receivers who kept cars longer than the time required, were punished by fines or by jail sentences. The Nazis also increased by a ton the authorized weight the freight-cars could carry.

Belgian locomotives came back from the Eastern front by the hundreds, badly damaged from the wear and tear of the Russian campaign. As operations proceeded, carloads of rails were sent to the Russian front, and in 1942 360 out of 3,200 miles of track had been requisitioned. Before long the rolling stock was in such a bad state that travelling and transportation became a real problem. Food

distribution was endangered, newspapers arrived in the provinces 24 hours late, the trip between Brussels and Liége, which normally took one hour, now took six hours; all direct traffic between towns like Antwerp and Ghent (35 miles distant) ceased, and an extensive detour was the only means of rail communication.

In the last year before the war only five fatal accidents occurred on the Belgian railroad system. In 1942, the company declared that in three months 25 railroad "accidents" had taken place.

However, if these occurrences were "accidents" from the German point of view, as far as the Belgians were concerned they were part of the program of patriotic resistance which the Belgian railroad men, as well as the Belgian underground, had decided to carry out against the invaders.

From the very beginning of the occupation acts of sabotage occurred in great number. The Germans took hostages after each incident and during operations they put them on the trains to be shot on the spot if sabotage occurred. After a while, they made the civilian population of the towns along the railroads responsible and ordered them to guard the tracks. In many instances they put groups of four men every 50 feet. At Arlon they chose those guards from among persons well known for their hostility to the occupying power, in order to have a better reason for punishing them on the first occasion. In other places they rearrested hundreds of liberated prisoners of war in reprisal for railroad sabotage.

A year ago the astute action of the Belgian railroad personnel in sabotaging the system had resulted in laying up 50 per cent of the freight cars in repair shops. By mixing

sand with the grease, they succeeded in burning out the axles.

When the plight of the Germans on the eastern front became apparent, and when they had to shift a number of troops of occupation from Belgium to Russia, the activity of Belgian railroad saboteurs became more systematic and widespread. In Liége province at one time 32 locomotives were smashed, eight railroad stations set on fire and trains loaded with supplies for Russia wrecked. Coal cars were raided. In a great number of places, regular gun battles between the Germans and saboteurs occurred after trains were derailed.

In 1941 the Nazi command ordered the manufacture of 200 engines in Belgium. By the beginning of 1942 not one of them was completed, despite heavy punitive measures. Efficiency experts and armed guards were sent to every section of the railroad plants to watch the workers and to speed up production.

When the mass deportation of Belgian workers began, a number of railroad men were included in the lot. Notwithstanding the drastic legislation against such action, the Liége railroad men went on strike. The Nazis were so impressed that they made some conciliatory promises, never, of course, kept. At one time they requested the railroad company to send 15,000 workers to the Reich. They expected the management to do the recruiting. But the management refused to live up to that collaborationist expectation. The Germans were told that if they wanted volunteers, they could go into the workshops and get the men themselves. The result of the Nazis' campaign was that less than a hundred men among the 100,000 accepted the German offer. Some time later, hard up for indus-

trial labor, the Germans told the company that they wanted the list of its employees. True to their policy of noncollaboration, the management refused.

During the mass deportations of laborers to Germany, the railroad workers deliberately slowed up traffic and succeeded in disorganizing the German routine.

The underground press contains detailed instructions on how to wear out locomotives and brakes. One pamphlet says: "A handy man, supplied with a simple razor, can stop a train. He can cut through the Westinghouse brakes (rubber hose connecting two cars)." The Companions of Resistance, a powerful underground organization, circulates the following encouraging slogan among the railroad workers: "*You can do more than the R.A.F.*" They explain their point as follows: "It is so easy to disrupt the wonderful organization of the railways. It is enough to think it, it is enough to wish it. No need of dynamite, no need of violent means. Every man at his post can perform miracles. It is so easy to lose time, hold-ups are so frequent, it needs so little to cause delays in the schedules, and above all it is so very easy to appear a little stupid in order to gain the object desired: to immobilize, to slow down, to disorganize the railway traffic with the object of hastening the victory of the Allies."

Scores of poets in Europe have said that true happiness is only found in railroad stations: "le bonheur est dans les gares." There is little happiness now in any station all over the world and especially in those of cruelly-oppressed countries. But already the brave railroad workers of Belgium are doing their best each day that stations may become again the symbols of our desire for escape, the milestones on the road to freedom and happiness.

11.—Youth: Youth Fights Back

In June 1940, when the Germans had France at their feet, their immediate preoccupation was that life in the occupied areas should return to normal as soon as possible. Several millions of Belgians had left their homes, fleeing to France in a desperate move to escape a repetition of the monstrous cruelties the Germans had inflicted upon their parents or their kin in 1914.

The wildest stories have been circulated about the Machiavellian cleverness of the German fifth column in Belgium which supposedly succeeded in luring all those people onto the roads. Ninety-nine per cent of these fantastic tales are pure invention. The Belgians knew the Germans from the last war, and they were not anxious to meet them twice in a lifetime on the same terms.

Jean Bodin (died 1596), one of the first French writers to inquire about the real wealth of nations, arrived at this well phrased conclusion: *Il n'est richesse ni force que d'hommes.* There are no riches or power except in men. The Germans knew this excellent expression of classical wisdom. They did all that was in their power to induce the refugees in unoccupied France to come back to Belgium as soon as they could. They even sent special emissaries to

groups of Jewish people in Southern France to tell them that no harm would be done to them . . . if they brought home their possessions and please would they not forget to bring their raw diamonds and their foreign currency along.

One of the most colorful incidents in this repatriation campaign was the way in which the Germans tried to build up the German soldier as the protector of women and children. He was depicted as a kind of Longinus, the good and righteous soldier, the shining knight in armor. He was tall and blond, he had a nice open face and a winning smile. Thus he appeared on thousands of German posters, carrying in his arms, with loving care, a shy little girl, a poor and tired refugee driven on the road to exile by those naughty British, but now enjoying the protection, the care, the understanding sympathy of the triumphant Nazi hero.

The Germans wanted the refugees to come back and they also wanted their children. They evidently had their plan, a long-range project which was inspired by what they had been doing to their own youth. It must be remembered that sinister Signor Mussolini had started the horrible procedure. Remember how he had five-year-old kids, the Balillas of the Fascist Party, parade through every town of Italy, their chins thrown forward in an imperative pose, small daggers dangling from their hips, singing bloodthirsty songs they fortunately could not understand. Only a little later the Nazis took the German youth in hand; everything was done to get the children away from their parents, to destroy their family life, to absorb them completely after their school hours through compulsory drills, through compulsory attendance at meetings where

they were formed into guards of honor, etc. The primary object, however, of Nazi education was to set this youth against its parents, to instill in it the belief that its conservative elders were repulsive remnants of a past era, old and soft and unable to understand the greatness of the Nazi Golden Age. Belgian youth too had to be re-educated. The first thing to do was to tell it all about Germany and to counteract everything it had been taught before on that subject. A commission was set up to expurgate all the history text books used in Belgian schools. They contained, of course, very uncomplimentary passages about the war of 1914, and the way the Germans conducted it in Belgium. There was little else to be done about it, so the Germans simply tore out the objectionable pages. Even schoolchildren must have been a little bewildered by the fact that apparently nothing special had happened in the world between 1914 and 1920. However, schoolteachers were told to explain how unjust and cruel the Versailles Treaty had been.

The favorite theme of German propaganda among the masses in Belgium is that the British are starving the Belgians by means of the blockade. German posters represent Churchill as a menacing ogre, bending over hungry-looking Belgian children who sit at a table before empty plates. To give credibility to this assertion, the Germans approached the working people who were terribly hard up and made the following magnificent proposition to the mothers of small children: the Germans would send them for two or three weeks to foster parents in the most fertile agricultural parts of the Reich. A certain number of small Belgian slum children were thus sent to Germany; they came back with their health and their weight visibly im-

proved and the foster parents, duly instructed by the Nazis, had given them a loaf of nice white bread to take back with them, some jam or other delicacy which would impress the starved Belgian parents. It was an excellent job of propaganda, costing practically nothing and filled with an eloquence all its own.

The vigilance of the Belgians, however, prevented this trick from fully succeeding. Patriots visited parents and urged them not to send to Germany any children old enough to be influenced by Nazi ideology. Priests preached openly against the Nazi scheme, warning the parents of the moral damage inherent in accepting charity from the Nazis.

Knowing that open air life appealed as much to Belgian youth as to that of any other country, the Germans ordered the organization of Volunteer Labor Camps for young people. Boys and girls, in separate camps, could enroll freely and partake of healthy out-door life, at the same time doing all kinds of useful jobs for the rural communities. There was nothing very objectionable about this proposition except for the fact that in several instances the Germans tried to put men or women in charge of these camps who would preach their theories to the young people. These boys and girls had to be told that the Nazis were the inventors of this bright idea and that, but for the Nazis, they never would have had such a good time. The Belgians, however, managed to prevent this maneuver and almost all the camps kept a pure national spirit.

The Nazis hoped to be more successful in the universities. They had a huge stock of dusty, pedantic theoreticians of Nazism who were all too willing to spread the Good Word in a country where the requisitioned food

was still nice, where good butter was still available (good butter for good Nazis of course, not for the inhabitants) and where one could even find silk stockings to send home to the Frau. These missionaries of Nazism immediately descended upon Belgium but if the Germans could appoint them as supplementary professors to the Universities, they could not compel the students to listen to the apostles of Adolf Hitler. They could not even force the Belgian professors to have social intercourse with the intruders. After a while the Nazis were horribly shocked to learn that the professors of Ghent University when meeting one of the intruders in the faculty buildings would turn back and take another corridor.

At the beginning of their campaign to influence Belgian youth the Nazis were full of consideration for these poor youngsters who had suffered so cruelly from democratic neglect. But when they found out that flattery didn't succeed they resorted to insults. One of their papers informed its readers that the students were decidedly dumb, that they were more preoccupied in smuggling food for their parents than reading the abysmal profundities of Mr. Rosenberg or Mr. Haushofer. Moreover said the journal, they are Anglophiles. When Roosevelt or Churchill says something it is accepted as Gospel truth and in the high schools the priests and nuns teach them to pray for the Russians and for Stalin.

To dishonor Jewish children they forced them to wear the yellow star of David on their sleeves. But when one of these children came for the first time into his class with this armband the teacher asked the child to show "his lovely badge of honor" to all his fellow pupils.

In a few places local Quislings, profiteers of the régime,

tried to organize young boys to parade in meetings and to masquerade as a kind of Hitler jugend. A Nazi paper (*De Nationaal Socialist* of November 28, 1942) tells the following story about this strange experiment. "The boys are summoned to the meetings too often and at inconvenient times. On one occasion the boys were provided with drums and flags and placed on a platform. They did not understand the meaning of what they were doing and of course they were soon disgusted with everything political. Besides they have difficulties with their parents because they come home late. It is stupid to send those boys out to sell our weekly. Our adversaries spit on these little fellows who are unable to answer questions satisfactorily. Dozens of examples could be given but these will suffice."

One could indeed hardly expect little boys to take interest in the politics of traitors at a time when schoolteachers all over Belgium regularly reported that pupils were fainting in their classes as a result of undernourishment.

In order to counteract German propaganda among the masses the very popular boy scout organizations in Belgium tried to increase their membership. They were so extremely successful that they provoked the alarm of the Nazi press which now violently attacks them as propagandists for the Allied cause.

Since the introduction of compulsory labor for all men from 18 to 50 the Germans have discovered that the number of students in the four Belgian Universities has increased in astonishing proportions. Instead of the usual 1,400 there are now 3,000 students in Ghent. The students of the closed Brussels University have most of them registered at Louvain. The Nazi press has interpreted this increase as a proof that most of these young men sim-

ply want to escape labor conscription. They are no dupes of this stratagem, they declare, and with brutal threats warn these boys that it will be found out if they are merely fugitives from the Nazi labor chain gang or if they are really students.

After two years the Nazis have not succeeded in perverting the spirit of Belgian youth. When the son of a Quisling wants to go to college, special measures are required to provide for his safety. The other pupils are all too ready to beat him to a pulp.

Belgian youth has its martyrs: for instance, the seven-year-old child who played on a bridge at Schaerbeek and was killed by a sentinel. It has also its little heroes: those courageous youngsters who, when dawn rises slowly on the prostrate and oppressed homeland, diligently distribute copies of the hundred underground newspapers. Like the agile and relentless picadores in a bull-fight they prick the German brute at a thousand points with these secret messages of hope in our common victory. And when in the bleak light of the Belgian morning they scribble on the walls of our ancient cities the date

1 9 1 8

it is not meant as an exercise in calligraphy but as an ironic challenge to those who thought that the Belgian youth would gullibly swallow the repulsive message of Nazism.

12.—Women: Women of Belgium

PRESENT DAY SITUATIONS IN EUROPE MUST NEARLY ALways be explained through tradition and history. It may look like a nuisance to the American observer, but, almost every time, it pays in the end. It proves how deep the roots of contemporary European conditions go. It shows how dangerous it would be to upset rudely an intricate and delicate machinery that has produced European culture, which notwithstanding all its terrible shortcomings, its fatigue and its alleged decadence, still remains something to write home about.

From the Middle Ages on, foreign travelers who visited Belgium have been kind enough to note that Belgian women had some characteristic traits which were worthy of high praise. Very often they expressed their astonishment at them and sometimes even their envy. Of course, one should not forget that our neighbor's domain always looks rosier than our own.

The privileged position women enjoyed in Belgium seems to have been due to the very optimistic view the moralists of that country had on the subject. As a rule the

philosophers and moralists of the Middle Ages were rather harsh on the female of the species. They often expressed their distrust and their basic disapproval in language of such violence that we would today consider it unfit to print. These clumsy exaggerations were used mostly in self-defense by the men, and probably the ladies—smiling wisely at this age-old game of insults hiding affection —were very much pleased to be looked upon as such influential, be it pernicious, creatures.

The Flemish poet Jacob van Maerlant (he died about 1300) took a far more conciliatory attitude. Although some people call him the Flemish Chaucer, he was a great moralist. Van Maerlant had come to the following conclusions on woman's nature:

Vrouwen sijn bi naturen goet:
Si slachten den wine enter gloet,
Die de werelt verbliden.
Die des wijns te vele indoet
Ende na den viere set den voet,
Hine cans niet geliden.

"By nature women are good. They are like wine and fire which rejoice the world. If you take too much wine or if you come too close to the fire, you're bound to hurt yourself."

In other words, van Maerlant agrees with that remarkable philosopher in *Porgy and Bess* who asserts in a splendid although ungrammatical phrase that "woman is a sometime thing . . ." But, the basis, said van Maerlant, is decidedly good. He gave the women of his country a break and his influence on other writers and poets was so great that one could scarcely find an unkind word

about womanhood in the Flemish authors from then on. Belgian women thus acquired far more liberty and a better social standing than their sisters in other countries. In the 16th century foreigners marveled that Belgian women were allowed to do business exactly like men and that in most of the households they used to run the finances, and did very well at it too. The strength of their position in the household can be felt very clearly by looking at the family portraits of the Renaissance. Invariably husband and wife face the onlooker on the same level. The children stand between them or play in front of them. A little bit in the background, but dominating the scene by her sheer youthful loveliness, stands the housemaid, carrying fruit and flowers, an unconscious challenge to the aging wife who calmly and with perfect poise ignores it.

Through the ages the great painters of the Flemish school have lovingly portrayed Belgian women. The primitive painters represented them as fragile and as sweet as angels. Rubens accentuated their solid and healthy earthliness; van Dijck saw them as lovely aristocrats, Stevens made them into graceful drawing room belles and the modern painters gave them generously one eye more than normal or they represented them with their chin on their back. You can't trust the painters, even the amateurs. For one, just look at Hitler.

The most outstanding praise that has been given to Belgian women, aside from the usual compliments about their beauty, their complexion and their eyes—all of which are the result of empirical and very personal impressions, and therefore may be discarded—are of their courage and their thriftiness. All the authors agree on the fact

that Belgian women know how to make both ends meet, and when their enthusiasm is at a peak they declare: "As far as their character is concerned, they are able to behave and act like *men.*"

In the last war they did. Many of them died for their country. Gabrièlle Petit, a young girl of humble extraction, who devoted herself to patriotic work in connection with Edith Cavell's activity and was finally shot by the Germans, became the symbol of Belgian womanhood in that period.

In the conflicts that divide the world of men, women are quite naturally inclined to regard these issues as abstractions in order to alleviate the sufferings of friend as well as of enemy. Their quality of mercy where human sorrow is concerned is well known. But if they are inclined to help a beaten and wounded foe with kindness and patient care, they are also well armed to inflict upon the boastful victor the revenge of an unbroken spirit, the affront of an unfailing belief in the justice of the national cause. Mr. Steinbeck has told in *The Moon Is Down,* the story of the unobtrusive old Belgian lady who killed a dozen German officers with a long black enameled hatpin. This creature was born in the imagination of the author. Reality is less brutal but not less clear. Germans themselves have told the tale of the old lady in whose chateau a number of high-ranking officers had been billeted. When they left, they went to pay their respects to the lady of the house and to thank her for her hospitality. She was very graceful but she replied: "You have nothing to thank me for, gentlemen. You were not invited."

The 26th of August, 1914, General von Kluck called on

Princess Marie de Croy in her castle in Belgium. The princess addressed this question to him: "General, tell me please, how do you justify the invasion of our neutral country and the horrors you perpetrate here?" The General said: "But, Madame, be assured that we will repair, we will settle everything." To which the princess replied: "Undoubtedly, Sir, you will resuscitate our soldiers and the civilians you assassinated; Germans are so efficient. But one thing you will never restore: the honor of Germany."

During the last war, Mrs. Charlotte Kellogg, who observed the Belgian women in their struggle against the terrible odds of war and famine, reported on their behavior in a book the title of which was very significant: *Women of Belgium Turning Tragedy to Triumph.*

For over three years, women in Belgium have been waging a relentless war of nerves on the Germans. Thousands of them had died in the blitz, killed along the roads, stricken with their children and infants so that complete panic might be created. Those surviving the ordeal laughed bitterly when they saw on the walls of their ruined homes the beautiful German posters representing a friendly Nazi soldier carrying in his arms a Belgian child.

The Belgian women were the first to express the feelings of their countrymen about the policy of starvation and looting the Nazis practice on the population of Belgium. Disregarding the threats of reprisal for public demonstrations, they organized marches through many a town, carrying a black flag of famine. They addressed the holders of office in the townhalls and in the ministerial departments, telling them how their children were dying

for lack of bread and fuel. It is recorded that in some instances, at least, they got partial results, but in many cases they had to go to work in Germany so that their children might eat and live. When Belgian railway and streetcar men were deported to the Rhineland and elsewhere, the women had to take over. In the mass deportations of forced labor to Germany, Belgian women suffered heavily. Thousands of them were called to the *Werbestellen,* the recruiting stations, and shipped to the Reich where they were put to work in factories. In some cases the Germans, at the peak hours of business, marched into lunchrooms, restaurants or warehouses where the personnel is prevalently feminine, and brutally abducted scores of girls and married women to Germany, leaving them only a few minutes to get ready.

In the horrible food situation the women, of course, carry the heaviest burden. They stand in line for hours, they see their children perish and die. When the occasion arises, they help Allied soldiers and fliers. Among the first victims of German oppression were a number of women executed for having kept English soldiers in hiding for months after the invasion. Seventy thousand of them wait for their sons, their husbands, their sweethearts, whom the Germans are holding as prisoners of war. Belgian women now publish their own underground newspaper *La Voix des Femmes,* a well-written bulletin, intended to give women practical advice how to snub most effectively the oppressor of their fatherland.

One of the underground newspapers rightly compares the humble, unending task of resistance of the Belgian women to the work undertaken by the 49 daughters of

Danaus who try to fill a bottomless barrel in Hades. Although it is clear that their work never ends and that they have to start over again each day, still they say each time: "Sisters, let us try it once more. . . ." Belgian women will go on trying till the day of liberation comes.

MUZZLING BELGIAN SPIRITUAL LIFE

1.—"When I Hear the Word 'Culture'..."

A FEW YEARS BEFORE THE WAR, THE GERMAN BOOK-stores used to sell a beautiful calendar containing for each month a decisive and characteristic utterance of one of the Nazi grandees. On one of the pages one could read in heavy gothic lettering this sentence: "When I hear the word culture, I grab my revolver." For a whole month the German public could try to make a logical deduction from this enlightening statement. As we gather small items of information about what happens in Belgium today, it seems that the Nazis are living up to the teachings of their calendar.

There is no country in the world where painting is as popular as in Belgium. You couldn't prevent the Flemings from trying to interpret their vision of the world by means of colors any more than you could find a way to prevent the Walloons from singing and making music. But Hitler, who used to paint postcards, has definite ideas about painting. He has expressed them several times: he objects to cows being painted green and grass being painted blue. He dislikes pink oaks and yellow lakes. He positively likes chromos, the kind of "art" one finds

on candy boxes and on cheap cigarette cases. When the Nazis marched into Belgium, they found a great number of people who had not yet heard about Adolf's strict esthetic taste: they continued to paint and draw as they had always done, according to their mood and fantasy. Something had to be done.

The most outstanding Belgian painter of today is one Constant Permeke, a sturdy, powerful Fleming about whose art F. E. Hyslop, Jr. of State College, Pennsylvania, wrote in the following terms: "No other living Belgian painter has a larger vision of man and nature or a greater mastery of plastic expression. At his best, Permeke must be counted among the most important figures in contemporary European painting." At the first showing of his work after the occupation, the Nazis walked in and told the owner of the gallery that this man's paintings were non grata. Mr. Permeke was asked to discontinue his artistic labors, otherwise the Nazi critics would "grab their revolvers."

In the field of literature their interference was even more drastic. They confiscated the tremendous amount of anti-Nazi literature that was available in the country's bookshops (which was after all quite normal) but they came back and took away all books by Paul Claudel, Jacques Maritain, André Maurois, François Mauriac, Romain Rolland, Georges Duhamel, J. Giraudoux and others. Nobody understood what the splendid novels of Mauriac or the noble poetry of Claudel could have to do with politics or with the "honor" of the Wehrmacht. It was simply a measure to deprive the people of those authors who constituted a good part of their daily intellectual bread.

In recent years the Nazis had tried to flatter and bribe some Flemish novelists and poets by translating their works into German. They counted on their being grateful, but most of these representative Flemings turned a cold shoulder to them. As a result of this behavior paper became oh so scarce! for them. When these authors wanted to reprint their successful books and novels which had no connection with the war whatsoever, they were informed that the paper supply had given out. Another form of nagging was to publish long reviews of books which were in popular demand without mentioning the name of the writer, especially when the author happened to reside in the United States.

On the "positive" side, they had *Mein Kampf* translated and put on sale at $3. However, the sales were not satisfactory. A Nazi newspaper even offered either "a pair of pants or a copy of *Mein Kampf*" for 50 subscriptions. It is possible that the pants were only a decoy to test the applicants' devotion to the Fuehrer's ponderous masterpiece, but Belgians were thoroughly amused by the incident.

An exhibition devoted to "German Grandeur" made a tour of Belgium, showing Nazi book production during the last few years. But the Nazi-controlled press complained that people showed no interest. In France, they said, many people after the fall of the Maginot Line retreated behind the Ligne Descartes, meaning the classical French thinking inspired by the philosopher Descartes. In Belgium they moved from the Albert Canal to the Mercier-Max Canal of Belgian patriotic thinking. Intellectuals became "attentists"; writers refused to publish or to speak in public. Literary life came to a standstill.

How could it be otherwise? A Verordnung of January 6, 1942, prescribes that all artistic and literary copyrights are to be controlled by the occupation army. When a prominent Flemish monthly, devoted only to good writing, was suppressed by the Nazis, its Quisling friends shed crocodile tears but said that times were terrible for everybody. The paper shortage did not prevent them from founding two mongrel and unsuccessful monthlies.

But who can stop the poets? They went on and thought that their rhythms and rhymes, unpolitical as could be, would be spared. Delusion! The Nazis found out that they were not writing about the Fuehrer nor about the New Order; they commented on Spring and a new girl instead. A critic was put to work who wrote obligingly, "There is no order or understanding in present-day literature! Never, especially in poems, have so many stupidities and lies been written, and never so many mistakes made! Chaos exists. Only through a better knowledge of present-day German literature can Flemish literature be improved!"

The Nazis took over the movies, eliminating American films, leaving only selected junk of old French films and sending to Belgium such an avalanche of third-rate German films that even the Nazi-controlled press dared to state the fact. They also attacked the United States through the film medium: one short is dedicated to "American Culture." It shows Mrs. Roosevelt trying on a dress, shots of a repression of strike riots and the suicide of the man who jumped from the Gotham Hotel. Look, says the text, that's America for you. A free theater shows all this, and Belgians used to patronize it in wintertime to save light and fuel for a few hours. They

often got arrested, however, for making fun of newsreels about fantastic German victories.

In their attack on the Belgian intellect, the Nazis have abandoned the sugar-coated tactics they used so benignly in the beginning. They throw the professors of the University of Brussels in jail, they threaten the Catholic priests who refuse to bow to their orders. They hate the intellectuals as they hate culture. One of their obedient servants calls it, in *Volk en Staat,* "a desperate situation." "I have come to see more and more clearly," he says, "that our work must go on without the intellectuals."

Indeed, the intellectuals are entrenched firmly behind the Van de Meulebroeck-Van Roey Line, a line that does not waver for it runs through the hearts of all decent Belgian people.

2.—*The Brute and the "Lamb"*

IN *Failure of a Mission* SIR NEVILE HENDERSON TOLD us all about the great love Mr. Hermann Goering feels for works of art, especially when they can be purchased practically without expense on his part. After all, one should get out of conquered countries all one can.

Very often the lack of gratitude on the part of the "liberated" peoples gives Germany only trouble—and more trouble. German soldiers and conscientious ad-

ministrators of concentration camps are assassinated by the populace, and even those few people in foreign lands who really understand Germany and are desirous of lending Mr. Goering a hand end up by getting themselves murdered by their own compatriots. The insolent Belgians, Dutch and Greeks even claim they should eat as much as pure-blooded Germans. Sometimes these scoundrels blow up bridges and munitions factories. When Mr. Goering says something of significance over the radio, they brazenly make fun of it. "Liberating" these stubborn peoples is really no joke. The only reward that can be expected is a little painting now and then. Mr. Hitler would have liked to have the Venus of Milo—but he heard just in time that her arms were missing. It seems he refused the present. Everybody knows you can't satisfy Mr. Hitler with a fragment; he always wants the whole pie.

According to information received through that brave little underground newspaper, *La Libre Belgique,* Mr. Goering has been rewarded for his pains and labor in Belgium. After all we should not forget that he sent the Luftwaffe to Belgium in May 1940,—the splendid boys who wanted to emulate the marvelous deeds of Mr. Mussolini's fliers against the Ethiopians (those treacherous aggressors who attacked tanks and airplanes with bronze spears). These distinguished young men killed 10,000 Belgian women and children on the roads to France. They really worked hard, but from time to time were able to snatch a moment of fun and relaxation. It will be remembered how amusing the author of *I Was a Nazi Flier* found it to dive down on Belgian mothers running for shelter and frantically pushing their baby carriages to safety. Those brave warriors, those blond Nordic

demi-gods sent by Goering, did a really complete and thorough job, and they had some fun besides. But what did Hermann get out of it? A few headlines in the beginning—later, nothing but headaches.

However, it is a wise man who bides his time and true merit is bound to receive its reward sooner or later. That moment has finally come for pot-bellied Mr. Goering. He owes it to two distinguished Frenchmen—to Mr. Philip Pétain and to Mr. Abel Bonnard, member of the Académie Française and Minister of Fine Arts in the Vichy Government. These gentlemen have handed to Mr. Goering the greatest, the most extraordinary Flemish painting of all times: "The Adoration of the Lamb" by Jan van Eyck. The underground newspaper, *La Libre Belgique,* states that the editor waited a long time before releasing the news. When reports first came through it sounded unbelievable, but he carefully checked the sources and found the information to be correct.

Notwithstanding its brief existence, the Vichy Government has already acquired very definite traditions. Every state, every government should have traditions. A good set of traditions is to a government what a mink coat is to a chorus girl. Didn't Mr. Hitler tell the United States that it was a country which would fall apart at the first shock, just through lack of tradition? The Vichy Government has developed a wonderful tradition of vileness and degradation that will scarcely find its equal in history. Nobody in Europe is more energetic when it comes to throwing themselves at the feet of the Germans. They can't be outdone in that field; they possess to the highest degree what in European politics used to be called, "de l'énergie dans l'aplatissement."

At the outbreak of the war the Belgian Government gave 230 million dollars worth of gold to the Bank of France for safe-keeping and in June 1940 ordered this sum shipped to London. But the men of Vichy shipped it to Dakar, and when the Germans were informed of its presence there, they asked for it. Mr. Pétain, politeness incarnate, replied, "If you want the Belgian gold, gentlemen, help yourselves; here it is, and have a good time."

In May 1940, the Belgians—who know their Germans—had also shipped "The Adoration of the Lamb" to "safety" in France. It went as far south as the city of Pau in the Pyrénées and there it had been stored for over two years in the local museum. But only a few weeks after the Germans marched into Vichy France, Mr. Bonnard of the French Academy couldn't resist Mr. Goering's request, and he shipped the altarpiece of Ghent Cathedral to the foul murderer of the Luftwaffe.

Of course it is only a painting. It is not even a new one. It had been hanging for 500 years in a small dusty chapel in Saint Bavo's Church in Ghent. When visitors from the four corners of the earth came to see it, they usually became silent in the presence of a work which was majesty and beauty itself. For Flemish art, for Flemish sensitivity, for science, poetry and religious philosophy of the late Middle Ages, it had the same significance as Dante's *Divina Commedia* for Italy. It was the culmination of every idea, every loyalty the man of the Middle Ages had. In it was concentrated everything he liked or loved in visible creation or in heaven. A people may quarrel among themselves; they may be divided on a great number of questions, but there will always be some elements which in times of danger have the magic power of uniting

all national energies. The Greek historian Thucydides tells us that in times of national depression or political despair Pericles used to address the Athenians and say, "Look at the Acropolis; look at the Parthenon," and when the Athenians heard these words they were so proud of what they had accomplished in the world that they forgot their troubles and united against the common foe.

The majesty of Jan van Eyck's "Adoration of the Lamb" had the same magic effect on the people of Belgium. Each of them felt as if he had painted it. Nobody was in a position to explain its every detail but everybody felt that this compendium of science and art, harmoniously united, was the very symbol of the national soul. From now on it will adorn the drawing rooms of Mr. Goering and his ponderous spouse. These vulgar parvenus will show their "acquisition" to their many servile friends, and some scholarly pedant will write at least 2,000 pages of gothic print to prove that the Belgians never realized what this painting *really* meant and how great a "German" Jan van Eyck was.

The Germans thought they would win the Flemish people of Belgium over to their cause. Their efforts were in vain. German torturers are murdered in alleys at night, Quislings totter into canals and ditches to die an ugly and well-deserved death. The altarpiece of Ghent, the very heart of Flanders, is a captive in Germany. It has joined 70,000 soldiers (mostly Walloon) still imprisoned in German camps. It has joined the 600,000 workers abducted for slave labor in the Reich.

After the last war, the Versailles Treaty provided for the return to Belgium of two of the panels of the van Eyck polytych. It was restored again in all its glory, and

for 25 years it could be seen in the chapel for which it was painted in 1432. It will come back to its home in Ghent unstained, refulgent with the genius that produced it 500 years ago. Goering cannot taint it. In its five centuries of existence, it has survived sieges, wars and revolutions. It will survive the repulsive promiscuity of that boisterous Falstaff, H. Goering. For the spirit has always survived brute force.

3.—*Brussels University Stands Firm Against the Nazis*

In World War I, the Germans burned down the age-old library of Louvain University, maltreated the professors, destroyed the private libraries of many of them, ransacked the town and killed many of its inhabitants.

In May 1940, they again destroyed the Louvain Library, which was a gift of the American people, through many American colleges and universities which had contributed to the rebuilding of this great monument. Except for ousting several professors, the Nazis do not seem to have made the Louvain University their scapegoat this time. They found the University of Brussels a better object for their attacks.

Their "press" described this institution as a stronghold of freemasonry and of Jewry; it was labeled an "alien" institution, since a great number of the courses were given in French. It may or may not have been true that some professors of Brussels University were Freemasons—which they had a perfect right to be; it may or may not have been true that some were Jews but evidently those were "crimes" enough to incur forceful action against a powerful and patriotic private institution.

It was easy enough to find a pretext. The Nazis chose the linguistic situation in Brussels University. In recent years Louvain University had become practically a bilingual center. Brussels University was following the same policy, gradually adding Flemish courses to its French curriculum. It was nobody's concern that this process was fast or slow. The trustees of this private institution alone were able to judge if there was a sufficient demand and need, and if the necessary funds were available to pursue this policy.

On the advice of the German Commissioner, the Nazis decided to increase considerably the number of courses given in Flemish. They also designated their teachers. The faculty raised objections to three of these, for, not only were these men among the strongest advocates of collaboration in the present war but they had a record of "collaboration" during the first World War. One of them had just returned from a twenty-year exile in Germany.

In the war of 1914–18, the activity of these men had been essentially political. They had had no objection to befriending the Germans, who attacked and overran Belgium, as long as they were able to advance their own political ideas. In 1940, they went even further. For not only did they

bear no grudge against the Nazis who killed 10,000 of their fellow civilians; not only did they admire without reservations the Nazi military Moloch; but they accepted and were ready to propagate that satanic concoction of race prejudice, hatred of religion and contempt for science and civilization, which is the result of the joint efforts of that extraordinarily moronic trio, Hitler, Hess and Rosenberg.

For the professors of Brussels University to accept in their midst the prophets of the Nazi racial theories would have been an insult to the spirit of decency and humanity which they have always revered.

Like the aldermen of Verviers who refused to associate with their Nazi-appointed mayor, the professors of Brussels University said they would not accept the appointment of these faithful servants of Nazi "philosophy." They might have compromised. They might have given in to force, ready to boycott the courses of their unwelcome colleagues, but they preferred to state their opinions bluntly and firmly, so that they might stand as an example and spread their message to Belgian youth and to their countrymen at large.

They have achieved their aim. We bring you the echo of the decision for which, according to recent information, they are now paying dearly.

Here are the names of the professors and members of the Board of Trustees who have been sent to concentration camps:

Messrs. E. Baes, A. Dustin, R. Marcq, L. Cornil, G. Charlier, L. Hauman, M. Vauthier and R. Catteau.

Messrs. P. Govaerts and G. Smets have been arrested as Freemasons, and Charles Frerichs has been sent to a Brussels hospital under special surveillance.

Recently the Military Commander of Brussels, Dr. von Craushaar, published a decree transferring the complete authority of the Board of Trustees of Brussels University to the German Commissioner of the University, Dr. Hans Peter Ipsen: "*All the powers of the former President and of all the other members of the Board of Trustees are suspended, the date of suspension to be retroactive to November 25, 1941.*"

Thus are the Germans trying to transform a free institution of higher learning into a military barracks of Nazi training. The only result they achieved is that the university still remained closed.

4.—The Magnificent Rector

BECAUSE THERE WAS A WOOD, THE PLACE WAS CALLED Loo. On account of the marshes, *vene* was added. Together the words made Leuven in Flemish and, later, Louvain in French.

As in other good Belgian towns, the people devoted a number of years to killing each other before achieving a democratic form of government. When the local nobility and the conservative patricians had finally been disposed of, the people began to feel at home, but by that time the drapery industry, which had made the town prosperous, had left the city, and labor, it turned out, had

achieved little more than a Pyrrhic victory. At that critical moment, when Louvain seemed doomed to complete decay and economic oblivion, the region's duke, or his secretary, had a stroke of genius. In 1425 they founded a university at Louvain. It was to become an outstanding seat of learning, as well as, later, a symbol of martyrized science. Except for a short eclipse during the French Revolution, it carried on its mission victoriously and in the grand manner.

To a European, the campus of an American university looks like a preview of the Elysian fields. He gazes with admiration at the smooth lawns, the spreading trees, the imposing buildings. He looks with envy at the young people strolling leisurely over the grass, at the healthy, athletic young men, at the girls in their gay dresses clasping each textbook to their breast as if it were a child rescued from a raging fire. He listens to their laughter, to their clear voices ringing over the lawns. He feels how perfectly at ease they are, how unperturbed by the many problems which beset the minds of European youth. It seems impossible to him that there could be, anywhere in the world, a lovelier, more gracious portal to life.

European universities are mostly established in very old, small towns, and their atmosphere is entirely different. The weight of ages presses heavily upon them. Louvain's pride in her five centuries of scholarly endeavor, of ardent research and philosophical discussion, instills in the student's mind the impression that "life is real, life is earnest." He absorbs the idea that one of his aims should be to leave footprints in the dust of libraries, if not on the sands of time. Not only are the facts and ideas he learns mellowed with age and saturated with expe-

rience, but the very surroundings with which he comes in contact teach him the supreme importance of the eternal qualities of wisdom and science. There is no campus at Louvain; the university buildings, most of them three or four centuries old, are scattered over the town. The students of liberal arts and theology are deliberately assigned to those buildings from the walls of which history drips like Spanish moss. Those who study such "modern" subjects as engineering and surgery receive their instruction in buildings not unlike those of American colleges.

Within the narrow streets, dominated by the age-worn gables of old churches and palaces, academic life can be very colorful at times. On the opening day of the school year, the academic body, in cap and gown, walks in procession to high mass. During the term, when a young doctor presents his thesis, the university revives the picturesque and traditional ceremonies of old. After an exchange of subtle dialectics between the candidate and the professors who question him, the Rector Magnificus kisses the candidate on both cheeks, and the colorful procession files out under the resounding old arches.

Cafés are plentiful in Louvain, and the natives who frequent them are benevolently tolerated by the three thousand students and not too often molested. The favorite sport is walking, and as they wander in droves along the old fortifications, under beautiful trees, the students keep up a peripatetic inquiry on all subjects knowledgeable and even on some others. Their young voices are eager and gay in the soft night air. A few years later they may thunder in the courtrooms, from the pulpit or from a political platform.

Sometimes these young men become restless and unruly. They like to argue the pros and cons of any subject that strikes their fancy. Small incidents are transformed into tremendous issues, time-proof institutions and venerable men are treated with laughing disrespect and cruel irony. What can be expected from students who sit in the very rooms where Erasmus of Rotterdam pondered his masterpiece *In Praise of Folly?*

The ruler of this state within a state, of this scholastic Vatican of Louvain, with its many buildings, its colleges, its numerous convents and dependencies, is known as the *Rector Magnificus.* It is difficult for anyone, except, perhaps, a Lorenzo il Magnifico, to be called "magnificent" without provoking at least mild irony. But this title, given to the President of Louvain University, has never provoked any facetious comment. The Rector of Louvain is magnificent because of Louvain's achievements in the past and in the present. The university has reason to be proud of its scholastic record, as well as of the moral courage its heads have displayed throughout the ages. At least twice in the school's existence have the directors of this powerful institution proved their mettle by boldly challenging the country's most tyrannical rulers.

In 1573 they opposed the Duke of Alba, emissary of Philip II of Spain, who was trying to force on the Netherlands the harsh decrees of the Spanish régime. To this oppressor, who believed himself the world's outstanding defender of Catholicism, the Rector Magnificus wrote a dramatic warning: "The Holy Bible shows us that when stirred by indignation against the injustices, violences and frauds committed by a nation, God may transfer this nation's power to the hands of another country. He is not

in the habit, even on earth, of allowing, without punishment, His subjects to suffer vexation, the innocent to be oppressed, the poor to be exploited, the belongings of charitable institutions to be taken over by extortion and those who devote themselves to His service to be robbed." Thus the president of a Catholic university addressed the representative of His Very Catholic Majesty.

Two centuries later, delegates of the French Revolutionary régime wanted to establish at Louvain the cult of the Goddess of Reason. They invited the Rector Magnificus and the Board of the University to be present at this demonstration of neopaganism. The Rector replied that none of them wished to be present because: "We cannot accept any other cult as legitimate, licit and salutary but that which our Lord Jesus Christ has deigned to reveal and which His Church solely acknowledges. Therefore, our conscience does not permit us to take part directly or indirectly in the cult you wish to establish."

The result of this attitude was that the French authorities closed the university and sold most of its belongings. This great institution had fallen a victim to its courage. For four centuries its rectors had spoken out as bravely to the Catholic tyrants as to the heathen.

A few decades later, Louvain was reborn. What happened in 1914 is common knowledge. Its library was burned, many of its buildings destroyed, some of its professors killed in the savage attack of the drunken Germany soldiery. The Rector Magnificus was arrested and maltreated. Throughout the world the name of Louvain had a connotation of horror from the last war, and in this war it has acquired it again along with such martyred towns as Rotterdam and Warsaw.

In May 1940, the Germans again burned down the Louvain Library. In a clumsy propaganda effort, the Germans accused the British of setting the building on fire.

As part of their general policy of "friendliness," the Germans avoided provoking incidents with the Louvain University authorities. They allowed courses to be resumed, suspending, however, a few of the professors to whom they objected. When Brussels University decided to close its doors in protest against the appointment of some Quisling professors, a great number of the students went to Louvain. This displeased the Nazis, who launched a campaign against Louvain. But still nothing serious happened.

As their need for slave labor increased, however, the Germans found out that the student registration at Louvain University was growing abnormally. Many young men went there to avoid abduction to German factories. Were these boys really "students?" The Germans doubted it. They accused the university of taking in these "refugees" from labor conscription who refused to serve the Reich, and, "their patience exhausted" they demanded from the Rector Magnificus, Monsignor van Wayenbergh, a list of the student body.

Monsignor van Wayenbergh is a man of about 55, a modest, sympathetic figure, soft-spoken and on the shy side. Externally he has nothing of the conventional hero. He is a typical scholar and administrator, eloquent at times, but always prudent and cautious—a wise and able man.

When the Germans asked for the list of students, he must have felt the five centuries of Louvain tradition hovering over him. He must have felt a certain satisfaction

in giving as bold an answer as that of his predecessors under Philip II and the French Revolution. His colleagues of the Brussels University Board had already gone to jail, one of them dying shortly after his release from an ancient dungeon.

Monsignor van Wayenbergh behaved "magnificently" as his position demanded. The *Brüsseler Zeitung* tells us that for three years his conduct had been outrageous, very trying to their Fuehrer's famous "patience," but that recently not only did he refuse to hand over the list of students, but that he took all necessary measures to hide it from the Germans.

Monsignor van Wayenbergh was sent to jail for eighteen months. Five of his colleagues from the Ghent State University were also imprisoned. No oppressor of Belgium has ever gone so far; to attack the spirit in one of its most venerable representatives was to be the privilege of those who, when hearing the word culture, "grab for their revolvers."

5.—*Belgian Humor*

SINCE BRUEGEL, THE BELGIANS HAVE DEVELOPED PERsiflage at the expense of the oppressor to a fine art. Having undergone several foreign dominations, they know

how to dodge the occupiers' cruelties, but they devote great care to the conservation of their morale. In extreme misfortune, they found that humor was one of the indispensable vitamins for the human spirit. They had to make fun of their enemy, expose his weak sides, make him and themselves feel the irreconcilability of his aims and their own national will for survival and express their claim to personality and independence. Above all, they wanted to make fun of themselves, of their privations, their hardships, their thousandfold miseries. That was one way to fight the oppressor.

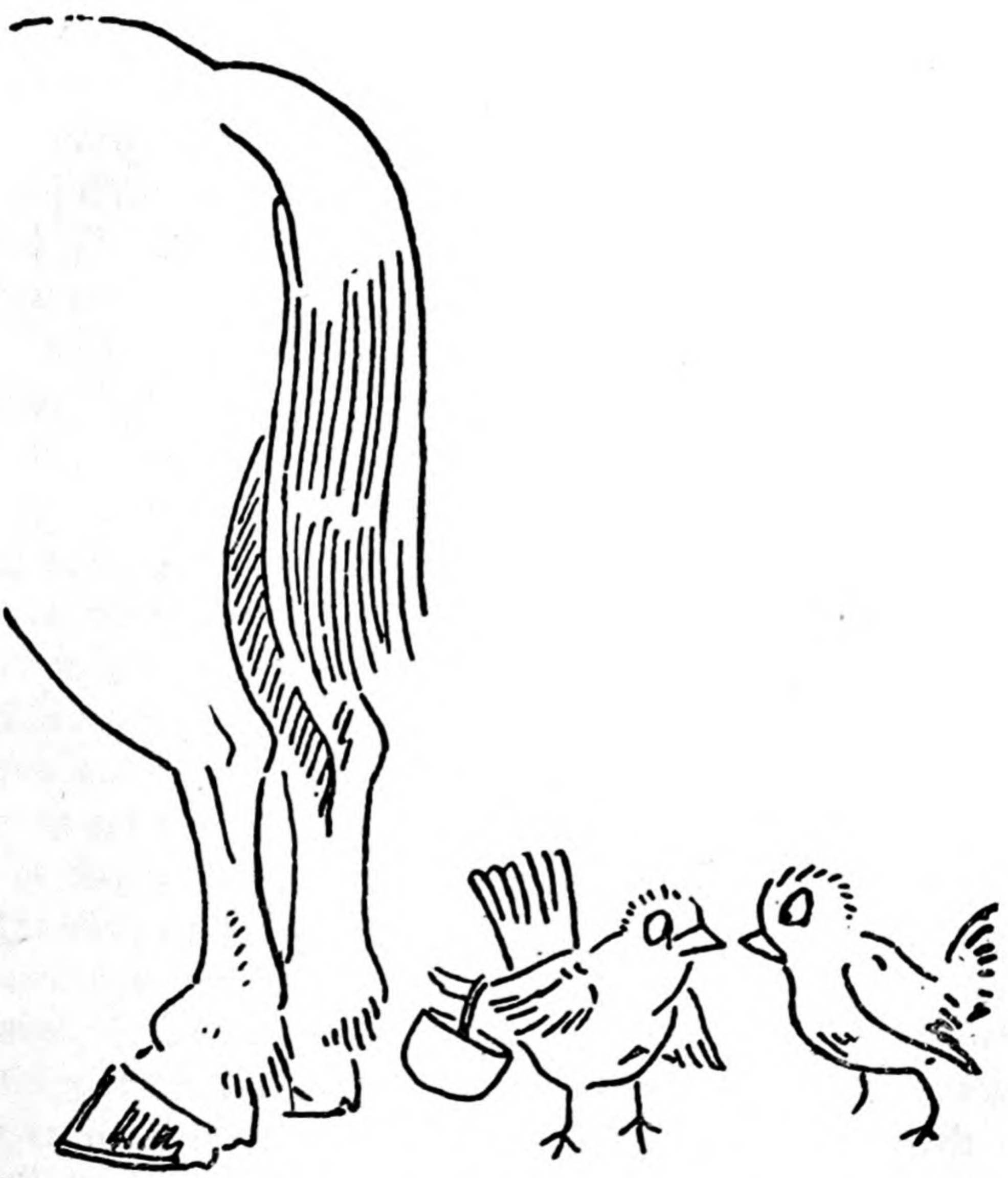
In this war the Belgians could not do away with the German regulations, the 4,000 *Verboten* or *Verordnungen* which were issued in less than two years, but their pedantry, their absurd abundance, their contradictions and their clumsy thoroughness could be exposed. After all, there was a decided touch of lunacy about the decree which gave higher rations to dogs of a German breed than to Belgian puppies. There was a note of Chaplinesque humor about the fact that at one moment the Germans decided to give an identification card to every pig.

Of course, one of the first *Verboten* was that against humor, for humor is the privilege of the free man. He has a right to use it, mellowed with charity, against others and, without restraint, against himself. In a free country, in a democracy, everyone who is tempted to take himself too seriously is constantly reminded of man's frailty and relative insignificance by those of his countrymen who use humor as a weapon and a corrective of human faults.

The Germans could not allow such customs to go on. For many years they had been listening to that extraordinary phrase which might well have been invented by a

secret enemy of Hitler: *Der Führer ist immer recht.* The Fuehrer is always right. A credo like that takes all human quality away from the individual for it is human nature to be fallible. Nobody with the slightest feeling for humor or psychology could listen to that phrase without a smile,

BREAD LINES . . .



Anything This Morning?

but apparently the Germans could. German humor or what passes for it could only find expression at the expense of the enemy at the very moment the Russians were indulging in the fine art of amusing self-criticism and gay comment on their own shortcomings.

After a while the free world heard about the Belgians' reactions to the German occupation. All kinds of disrespectful stories were told and practical jokes were played. Bookshops ostentatiously displayed such treatises as *Swimming in 10 Lessons, Learn to Swim,* etc., at the time Hitler and his gang were still planning to invade England. All the stories that had circulated in occupied Belgium during World War I, and which had probably been handed down from father to son, were revived and some new ones invented. And finally an underground organization, L'Espoir (Hope), issued a pamphlet which it sold for charitable purposes and which contained a number of cartoons on present day life in Belgium.

Of course the artist had to remain anonymous, but he could not hide his personality which is rich in the human qualities of courage, kind-heartedness and subtlety or his technical skill which in some cases is really remarkable. The artist's first pre-occupation is the fate of his own countrymen under German rule, and their reactions to it: the food problem, which is acute and even dramatic, is a frequent inspiration; the fuel shortage, the requisitioning, the increase in prices, the transportation problem occupy his mind and inspire his wrathful pen. Some of his drawings are merely waggish or facetious; others are exquisite in their charm and discretion. Among the best ones is that entitled "Bread Lines," which shows two preoccupied sparrows standing in line for provisions behind a horse.

Another theme treated with fervor and evident enjoyment is the war situation, especially since the news became better and the Russian winter worse. The cartoonist must look for the enemy's Achilles' heel. In this case he found it in the whole German back which the Russians kick with such enthusiasm and effectiveness.

At the risk of their freedom and their lives, Belgian patriots drew and circulated these pictures. After a while they were smuggled out of the country and reprinted; and if their artistic qualities have suffered a little in the process, their spirit, nevertheless, remains intact. Their message rings clear and is audible to all free men; it tells us of a belief in humanity and in justice that will never die, that rests so deep within the hearts of good men that the fires of the inquisition or the tortures of the Gestapo can never reach it.

1.—What Is a Colony?

WHAT IS A COLONY? ACCORDING TO A WIDESPREAD popular belief a colony is a distant territory exploited by the mother country, in conformity with the habits of ruthless capitalism and with complete disregard for the natives' welfare and lives. Recent utterances by American statesmen have somewhat confirmed public belief in this deprecatory concept of the term "colony." A sequence to this sentiment is the conviction that all colonial peoples are oppressed and, therefore, should be *liberated.*

Among the empire nations is Belgium. It has a colony in Central Africa about 80 times its own size, with a population of 14 million colored people, which is six million more than there are white inhabitants in the home country. Is this vast domain exploited and should its inhabitants be liberated from the Belgian "yoke?"

The time has come, it seems, for a frank discussion of this subject. A great deal of misunderstanding and some ill will exists with regard to the most essential elements of the position of Belgium and of the Belgian Congo.

There is no doubt that the debut of all colonial enterprises has been harsh on the colonized people. The closer the range of culture of the invaded countries was to that of the invaders, the fiercer was the resistance and the more brutal were the methods of subjugation. Colonial

conquest, with a few exceptions, has nearly always resulted in partial and sometimes even complete extermination of the conquered peoples. Initially colonization is a violent procedure. Nobody among the people of good will and Christian morals wants to excuse this fact, but history is there to prove that it is practically a rule. A great number of circumstances may influence the invaders' behavior and, consequently, safeguard the lives and property of the natives to a certain extent. When the Dutch conquered the East Indies, they found a population of approximately 10 million people. At present these islands are inhabited by about 70 million. When colonization began in North America, an estimate put the population figure at one million Indians; today there are 353,000 of them. This may sound like an indictment. It is not, however. Not all of the American Indians have been wantonly killed. Probably only a small percentage of them have been killed in actual warfare. They died mostly from contact with western civilization, in its manifold forms, economic, sociological and others.

We recall these historic facts with regard to the almost general belief that the beginning of Belgian colonization of the Congo was a series of horrors and a display of human beastliness without parallel. The excesses perpetrated in lonely sectors of the newly-discovered Congo have all been traced to a small group of people, in which practically every European country was represented and in which Belgians were a small insignificant minority. It is known that many of those who indicted Belgium at the time were moved by either personal or political motives which were far from commendable. Not a single accusation of cruelty or barbarism has been uttered against

the Belgians since the Belgian Government took over responsibility for the administration of the Congo in 1908.

It is, however, one of the ineradicable beliefs of generous souls all over the world that the savage, left to himself, is a happy, carefree individual, a prosperous Tarzan, who enjoys a permanent Shangri-La, a sensuous Moon-and-Sixpence destiny. Multi-colored birds delight his ears, and while he eats wonderful and wholesome food, streamlined antelopes, their gracious backs softly undulating like the hills of Jericho, speed by. Death comes with dignity, but without horror. Life for the colored man who never met the white civilizer is just one long "hour of madness and joy."

In fact, most of the primitive peoples—and on the whole the Congolese were extremely primitive—lived in terrible conditions. The Congo populations before the Belgians came were decimated not only through the continual warfare in which they indulged on a general scale but above all by the regular incursions of the Arab slave merchants. For three years, from 1891 to 1894, the Belgians waged a difficult and heroic war against these traders. Belgian officers and soldiers died that Negroes might be freed from slavery. Belgian troops even joined with those of Lord Kitchener's Egyptian army to end the Dervish resistance. Belgian rule also put an end to the wars between tribes and villages.

Tropical diseases and primitive hygiene accounted for a death rate recalling that of the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, when sometimes 50 to 75 per cent of the inhabitants of certain regions of Europe died of epidemics. It is the pride of Belgium that sanitary conditions

and medical aid in the Congo are better than anywhere else in Africa, that, for instance, in 1938, five million Negroes were examined by health services, accounting for nearly half of the colored population. The Foreami (Queen Elizabeth Foundation for Medical Aid for Natives), endowed by private and public funds, is entrusted with the building of hospitals, dispensaries and subsequently necessary roads. When an area has been cleared and made habitable, the State takes over and carries on at a moderate expense, not overburdened with the costs of the basic organization. More than ten per cent of the colony's budget is devoted to medical services.

In a country as well acquainted with the problems which arise between people of different color as the United States, it is superfluous to say that the relations between white and colored people in the Congo have been carefully planned. It has been Belgium's policy to respect, as much as feasible, native institutions—the elementary forms of government which most villages possess. These villages are administered through the chiefs and native leaders in accordance with their tribal customs. Justice is administered by their own civil courts which are run by the natives under white surveillance. In the cities and big industrial centers where Negroes from many different tribes live together, individual tribal customs can no longer be followed. Central governing bodies have, therefore, been formed in these cities, composed of Negro officials designated by the colored population. Of course, the presence of growing white communities of large proportions creates a situation for which the colored population is not prepared. To apply now our white men's ideas of democracy and self-government to a territory compris-

ing peoples of 80 different languages, having no common bond to unite them, would be a foolish and probably a fatal experiment. Democratic government was the highest achievement of those undisputed masters of mankind, the Greeks. It is not a natural state to which people spontaneously revert. It demands an education which thousands of Belgians, as well as missionaries and administrators, have been giving the Negroes for half a century. Their efforts are succeeding. Except for occasional and local recurrences of tribal superstitions involving criminal practices, barbarism has left the Congo.

Are Belgian Negroes exploited? The Charter of the Congo Colony decrees "that no one can be forced to work for private individuals or for companies." The law on native labor is a ponderous volume which eliminates all chances that individuals or companies could have to evade the clauses of the Charter. The only form of forced labor existing is the compulsion for every male Negro either to pay a modest tax each year or work it off in a certain number of days, generally at State road work. The Belgians followed an old native custom that each man must work a certain number of days for his chief. It has been recognized that road-building was a high point in Belgian colonization, resulting in "roads whose engineering feats and perfect upkeep make those of Kenya and Tanganyika look like cowpaths." [1]

Out of a native population of 14,000,000, only 420,000 Negroes are engaged as wage-earners, a low percentage. They have the problems every wage-earner has all over the world. They have even additional ones, due to their frequent homesickness and the need of adapting them-

[1] Negley Farson, *Behind God's Back*, p. 327.

selves to new surroundings, but it is a far cry from depicting these people as victims of a brutal capitalistic exploitation, who must be freed at once.

Step by step the government has built a series of restrictive devices around the big concerns which exploit most of the rich colonial mines. Even those who combat the influence of these companies are forced to recognize their creative rôle. Their social welfare organizations are outstanding models.

Colonies are often thought of as closed countries, the private hunting grounds of the white men of the homeland. The very basis of the Congo's political system prevents this colony from being closed. It is one of the few countries in the world which is open on an equal basis to traders of all nationalities. Out of 9,204 economic undertakings only 4,227 are in Belgian hands. Commercially it is therefore the world's market, not the Belgians' reservation.

The Belgian people were reluctant to accept the colonial idea. But having done so, they have fully understood that theirs is a mission, the basic justification of every colonial action—to wit, the emancipation of the natives and the opening to the whole world of the mineral and vegetable treasures which, at present, are recognized by all the Allies as one of the great contributions of the Belgian Empire to the common cause.

2.—*The Congo's Battle for Production*

DID YOU EVER HEAR THE STORY OF THAT VERY DECIDED old lady who candidly declared: "When it comes to modesty, I'll challenge anybody"? Evidently this dear old soul was not a Belgian, for the Belgians have a queer habit of being all too modest about their accomplishments, especially those they are engaged in at present. They will very willingly tell you that the Flemish School of painting is really the only one worthwhile, that Beethoven's grandfather was born in Mechlin, etc., but they'll be reticent about what they have accomplished in modern times. And even in their appraisal of the great deeds of their ancestors they are inclined to be strangely unequal to the occasion.

Every American schoolchild has read about the adventurous Father Hennepin who was the first to sight Niagara Falls and to publish a picture of this "wonder." His native town of Ath, a charming little place in the Walloon country, honors this discoverer of massive waters . . . with a quaint little public pump in a sidestreet. One couldn't be more modest. It is altogether ridiculous and touching.

This trait of the Belgian character, to which reference is made with complete detachment owing to the distance and the circumstances of the moment, is apparent also in the philosophic attitude the Belgians adopt when they see how their intellectual and cultural accomplishments are treated in encyclopedias and handbooks of all kinds in America. On account of the bilingual character of the country, foreign commentators on Belgium are often tempted to attribute what Flanders has produced to the Dutch while the French get the credit for nearly everything worthwhile the Walloons have done. To quote a few instances: César Franck of Liége practically always becomes a "French composer." The Dutch get away with one of the rare Belgian philosophers, Gueulinckx, and seldom do the Belgians receive any credit for the invention of that instrument of harmony or torture (as you like it) we call the saxophone, invented by Adolphe Sax of Dinant. They could possibly overlook this ingratitude but they feel rather puzzled when they see how Father De Smet, the great apostle of the American Indians, forfeits his Belgian birth and allegiance to become an "American" priest. In this epoch of blow-your-own-horn morals and I'll-out-shout-you techniques they mostly stand by and count on their mere merits to receive credit for what they have contributed to the world's beauty and progress.

Not even in this war have the Belgians been diverted from their traditional attitude. In 1940 they fought for eighteen days what was the most powerful army in the world and they lost terrain to a depth of about a hundred miles. The first German advance in Russia was far more rapid. They had as many soldiers killed as the Germans confess to have

lost in the entire Western campaign. They were blamed and insulted by a panicky French Premier who had to find a scapegoat for his own reverses. The defense of the Belgian army and its commander in chief, King Leopold, was assumed by Lord Roger Keyes of Great Britain and by Lt. Colonel Brown of the U.S.A., who paid tribute to the Belgians and vouched for their honest and courageous behavior. Later Wm. L. Shirer, who followed the German army of invasion, reported that "the Belgians have fought like lions, at least in the beginning." They stopped fighting when every other possibility had gone. Seeing how history has vindicated them, the Belgians may be encouraged in their belief that virtue and merit have an eloquence of their own and need not proclaim themselves from the housetops.

The same thing goes for the Belgians' colonial policy. They already have fifty years of colonial activity behind them. A violent campaign was launched against the individual ruthlessness of some (mostly foreign) elements who, before the Belgian State took over the administration of the Congo, endangered the natives' welfare and even some of the natives' lives. Since 1908 the Belgian people has taken upon itself the heavy burden of civilizing a country eighty times its own size. Of what the Belgians have accomplished for the natives too little has been published. What the American public mostly hears about the Congo is that it is a country of pygmies and elephants, giant dancers and gorillas. The movies have powerfully contributed to spread this "information." Those who know the Belgian colony are often able to point out that the most beautiful jungle scenes of some films were photographed exactly twelve feet from a highway as modern as Route 1.

In some instances even, missing scenes were shot in the "wilderness" of Long Island. The Belgians are pretty well fed up with this unrealistic picture of their colony. They are especially grateful when Americans who have lived there and who love the Congo publish their impressions. Among the most recent publications on the Congo is *Ten Years in the Congo* [1] by W. E. Davis who, speaking of the Belgians, says:—"I am convinced that they have done and are doing an excellent job of developing the Congo and its people. It is not an easy task. The Belgian Government has gone about its work calmly and methodically, and slowly but surely, it seems to me, it is building a sound economic and social structure in the face of considerable odds. The Government is, in my opinion, to be especially commended for its scientific attitude towards the old native culture; instead of trying to abolish primitive customs it is, whenever possible, developing the new order on the foundations of the old."

American authorities have rendered tribute to the great economic aid the Belgian Congo is giving to the Allied nations. Great quantities of mineral and vegetable products have been contributed by the Belgian colony to the common war effort. Little is known, however, about the effect this intensified industrialization and increased agricultural production has on native life: in other words to what extent a population of approximately 14,000,000 Negroes devotes its energies to a task similar to that which occupies millions of American workers. With the best intentions and remembering past excesses, some Negro publications in the United States expressed their alarm when the news was published that production in the

[1] Reynal and Hitchcock, N. Y.

Congo would be intensified. They suspected that compulsory labor would be introduced. Ironically enough this happens at the moment when every American citizen who is not already engaged in war work may soon be compelled to enter an essential industry.

There is striking evidence of the energy with which the Congo population has gone to work, especially in the industrial areas. For instance, there were 12,000 workers in the Katanga copper mines on December 31, 1941. During 1943 this figure has been raised through voluntary enlistments to 22,000. It should be remembered that most of the Congo is very thinly populated and that the natives are generally reluctant to leave their village. In the Costermansville province of 390,000 Negroes, 120,000 are engaged in war work.

The stay-at-homes are largely older men performing duties as chiefs, judges, police officers, etc. They ensure the upkeep of some of the 45,000 miles of roads over which the Congo's products are carried. This production comprises, besides foodstuffs for local consumption, huge quantities of exportable products: palm oil and palm kernels, cotton fibers, lumber, gum copal, coffee, cocoa and rubber.

To give a striking example of only one detail of the changes the war has brought to Congo economics, it should be noted that the construction of strategic railroads in Egypt and in the Middle East has resulted in a more intense exploitation of the Congo forests, which furnish the sleepers for these railroads. A large proportion of the increased lumber production goes also to South Africa for the crating of munitions and the construction of barracks.

Almost every one of the above mentioned products is of high strategic importance and their output is being increased with the utmost diligence. Obviously rail and water transportation require additional efforts, especially since a substantial flow of military traffic is passing through the Congo. New industries are springing up in order to husband the cargo space involved in imports: cotton spinning and weaving mills have been expanded, tool factories are employing available scrap.

For many reasons it is impossible to give a detailed and complete picture of the Belgian Congo's war effort. It is, however, certain that the Negroes as well as the whites who are working under considerable strain in a trying climate, separated from their homeland and their families, are doing their full share in this war. They are doing it willingly and under no more compulsion than the manpower organizations use in other Allied countries. When the story of the Congo's contribution to the war effort is told in full it will prove again that the Belgians have gone "about their work calmly and methodically" and that they have done a very good job.

II

FIGHTS IN THE FORUM

TWO FANTASTIC PLANNERS

1.—An American "Geo-politician" Reshapes the World

IN A CONFIDENTIAL MOOD FREDERIC II OF PRUSSIA ONCE told Voltaire: "When I want to ruin a province I send it a philosopher as governor." When Hitler wanted to set Europe and a good deal of the rest of the world on fire, he resorted to the services of a geo-politician, Mr. Haushofer, who made up that nice blueprint Hitler followed so successfully until he met those few hundred high school boys in the skies of England, those "Non Angli sed angeli" (Not Englishmen but angels) as Pope Gregory the Great would have said, who put his plans to shame and who saved the world.

Mr. Haushofer has found a pupil in the U. S., a Mr. Renner, George T., Professor of Geography, Teachers College, Columbia University. This scholarly gentleman has made maps for a new world. Some people may have the impression, looking at these colorful documents, that the professor got his maps all mixed up and that with the forgetfulness which is considered a characteristic of his kind, he simply submitted Mr. Schickelgruber's blue

prints instead of his own, but the accompanying article in *Collier's Weekly* takes that doubt away.[1]

President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill told the United Nations, big and small, that they are fighting for their independence or for their restoration, but Mr. Renner feels that "the weak cannot be kept in line and are a constant bait for aggression," which translated into plain language means that the jeweler should give the gold watches to the tough boys because there are not enough policemen on the beat—a rather original reversal of the classic solution which consists of enforcing the law.

The information on which the professor bases his reasoning is no more reliable than his syllogisms are. For instance "a Czecho-Polska state is already being planned by the Czech and Polish governments in exile" he says, while at the time only preliminary negotiations were taking place towards a common policy in certain matters.

"Germany," says the geo-politician of Columbia, "should include all the German-speaking peoples of Europe." This has a familiar sound, you will say and no doubt Mr. Goebbels will beam with delight. Proceeds magician Renner: "Alamazam, alamazum, alamazom," and Switzerland goes to pieces! It has been an independent democracy for eight centuries but it is distributed to France, to Italy and to Germany of course. Belgium also goes to pieces: one helping to France, another to England and, not to forget, a nice big lump to Adolf! Why? You don't understand? Poor morons, you! "Geo-politics require an intimate knowledge of people, language, cul-

[1] *Collier's*, June 6, 1942, p. 14.

ture, resources, business, transportation facilities and historical claims and priorities."

On the other hand if you demolish all that sacrifice and tradition have built in Europe for centuries, you have to behave in a completely different way in Africa. There you meet with "the reality of four independent African nations." African nations are quite different from European nations in this respect that Mr. Renner, probably ignoring their dialects, has discovered no reason to divide them up. Portugal is given to Spain because it is too small but Liberia stays as it is because it has been . . . "traditionally the ward of the U. S." Tradition helps the natives of Liberia but it does not count for age-old countries of high civilization and culture like Belgium, Holland or Switzerland.

All this preposterous fantasy could be discarded as the rêveries of a world-estranged maniac. After all when Faust is looking for an excuse for keeping company with Mephisto he tells Gretchen: "Es muss auch solche Kaütze geben!" (It takes all kinds of fools to make a world!) But when Mr. Renner speaks his mind about the Belgian Congo, then he far transgresses the limits of what even scientific hypothesis allows, he oversteps that boundary where the game of the spirit ends and where private solutions become insolent and sound like criminal libel. Mr. Renner, who six months after Pearl Harbor, was very preoccupied looking for "*a secure Japan*" [sic] and who has so many disagreeable things to say about the British Empire, hands Portuguese Angola, part of South Africa, part of Equatorial Africa and *the entire Belgian Congo* . . . to Germany. The Belgian Negroes, loyal to their protectors

who freed them from barbarism in what has been called the most successful colonial enterprise in Africa, who fought in 1914–18 and who conquered Southern Ethiopia from the Italians, are given free of charge to the Germans whose pre-war colonial policy always looked like a Gestapo handbook. Why do the Nazis receive the Congo? Germany has nothing! You remember Hitler's phrase about the Haves and the Have Nots?

Science is a beautiful thing and geography at Columbia University must be very refreshing, but the good Professor forgets that we, the United Nations, are fighting this war to win it for our side, not for Adolf, Benito and Hirohito. There is a slight mistake! He is on the wrong side of the fence.

You see, to the onlooker it is this way: Every day hundreds of people starve in Belgium, in Greece and elsewhere, tens of them march up to execution grounds and die. Falling down some cry: Long live Belgium. Long live Greece! Long live Holland! Scores of our people escape to England to join the R.A.F., the Belgian Army, the Belgian Navy. They may be killed on the high seas, they may float helpless for weeks before seeing the white cliffs of England rising like the walls of a promised land in the delicate fragrance of the English morning. Others die in the Ethiopian desert, thinking of the thousands of Belgians who gave their lives that 14 million Negroes might become civilized beings. Others risk their lives to distribute the 200-odd clandestine newspapers. Others go to prison for having refused in a thousand ways to submit to Nazi oppression.

All these humble peoples who ignore geo-politics, who have certainly not "the intimate knowledge of people,

languages, culture, etc., etc. . . ." die that their country may be freed of the curse of Nazi thought and deed, that again they may be themselves. They are no scientists but they have their heart in the right place. It may happen now that before they go to the fatal wall some agent of Dr. Goebbels will walk into their cell and show them Mr. G. T. Renner's article, and tell them: "You are dying that your ally, the United States, may give your colony to Germany, may cut your country into pieces, may hand to the Fuehrer everything he wants. Look, the American Herr Professor tells you so!"

They will only be able to do one of two things. They may shrug their shoulders in disbelief or . . . they may retch with unbearable disgust, but they will all the same go to their death with, in their heart, on their lips, the name of the fatherland for the independence of which they are offering "the last full measure of devotion."

2.—*Culbertson Deals Europe a New Hand*

AT DODONA IN ANCIENT GREECE THERE WAS A FAMOUS oracle. As a rule an oracle was not supposed to be very clear in its utterances, and a good deal of interpretative

work was left to those who dared consult it. Many different methods were used and the priests of the temple often secretly gave a helping hand. Among other devices they had a great number of caldrons or kettles set up in a row, and when they wanted a god to speak, they struck one of them. This one banged against the next, and in no time a heavy rumble, apparently without natural origin, reverberated through the holy halls. People then exclaimed: "The god has spoken."

Things like that are bound to happen in every democracy where free speech is a rule. It is enough that one hollow object, one hollow skull, hits another to provoke after a while a terrific noise which might even impress people who should know better. We have already studied the strange case of Mr. Renner. He was a peaceful, unobtrusive professor at Columbia Teachers' College. One day, however, he drew a couple of nice maps. They really looked lovely; the shades were as delicate and as smooth as pastels. Mr. Renner had cut up the world according to his private fancy, which is, strictly speaking, his professorial right. The strange thing was that the result almost exactly resembled the blueprints for a new world Mr. Hitler has had in stock for some time. The discordant noise Mr. Renner made had not yet died down when a number of other and even hollower pots began to rumble.

It looks as if planning for a future and, of course, a better world has become one of those games people play after a heavy dinner. At first sight there is nothing objectionable about it. After all, everyone is entitled to his dreams and even to a reasonable amount of daydreaming. Life would certainly be a lot harder to bear if we did not have these inexpensive anaesthetics for our pains and sor-

rows. But dreams may become explosives, for it is quite certain that ideas drive men onward and that the greatest revolutionists have often been people who, as far as their external appearance and the style of their life is concerned, were noted for their quiet behavior and their peaceful conduct in the community. When Mussolini was still in his heyday in exile in Switzerland, he was certainly a bad boy, noisy and troublesome, while a few miles distant Mr. Lenin walked around like a perfect petit bourgeois, but carrying in his brain enough TNT to explode the whole empire of the czars. All this goes to show that the saber-rattling type of world planner and revolutionist is not the most dangerous, for the basis of society is order, some kind of order, and the aggressive revolutionist is only the symbol of violence. Said the Romans with a wise smile: "Violenta non durant"—violence passes.

Therefore, it is important to see what is cooking in the pots of a number of amateur or professional chefs, who concern themselves with our common future, especially when they advertise their brew with the aid of clever and loud publicity and attract the attention of the populace to their stock of goods.

In the last decade a lot of things we used to take for granted have been debunked. Some of these ideas were good; some obviously premature. We thought, for instance, that nature and society, religion and tradition prepared all of us for marriage. We hear now that marriage decidedly is a fine art. In a democratic state we take it for granted that everybody is supposed to be prepared for politics, but are we? If we reduce the political problem to the alternative of the rule of the few over the many for the profit of the few, or the rule of the many for the

profit of the many, then of course everyone has his opinion, according to his inclination and interests. But when it goes beyond that, when it comes to drawing a map for the entire world order, and taking into account all the intricacies, all the oppositions, all the cross-currents which time and nature have left us, then it seems that he who undertakes that job must be able to present some credentials.

Are we, any of us, going to establish peace on earth until kingdom come? We have no pipeline to Heaven, but we know that after many millions of ages the big fish continue to swallow the little ones, and that the big baboon continues to snatch the banana from the fingers of the baby baboon. This is, of course, a distressing piece of philosophy, a most negative attitude, but it is unfortunately based on fact. It does not prevent us from doing or wanting something, something clearly defined, which, while it may not last forever, should at least endure for quite some time. The generations to come will probably have their troubles, too. We have had two world wars in a short lifetime.

Mr. Ely Culbertson is far more ambitious. As a bridge player he has always won—and now he has drawn a plan for winning the war and winning the peace. He goes around with a certain number of testimonials from serious professors and "authorities" who declare that his plan comes next to the first chapters of Genesis. Superlatives are heaped on his head and his views are taken seriously by a number of otherwise sensible people.

We do not intend to discuss his views or the logic of his reasoning. We look at it only from the Belgian

angle. Through history the Belgians have had only one ambition: to run their overcrowded country in a decent way. Without exaggeration it may be said that 8,500,000 people managed to live in a very small territory and to attain a high level of social and intellectual development. Their job was small, but they did it well. Mr. Culbertson's enterprise is vast, global, cosmic. It certainly interests the Belgians to know what becomes of them in this new shuffle. Putting aside all matters of principle, we get down to results and turn to page 24 of Mr. Culbertson's magic plan. It contains the world's territorial table and tells where we all belong. As far as Belgium is concerned we are told that it becomes part of Latin Europe. We join France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and we get pretty close to the Holy See.

For practically three centuries different governments in Belgium have tried to "latinize" the Flemish part of it. They did not succeed and today about 4,500,000 out of over 8,500,000 Belgians use Dutch, a Germanic language, as their means of expression. Evidently our global planner considers this a detail. Handling hundreds of millions of people, little does he care what 4,500,000 of them might want. The Dutch, the Danes, the Norwegians and Swedes join Germany and a happy reunion that will be! Wonderful feelings of lasting friendship will spontaneously grow up between the peoples of Rotterdam and Berlin, of Narvik and Nuremberg!

But the strangest thing about this plan is that while our Dutch neighbors lose their Far Eastern colonies, they get the Belgian Congo as a consolation or rather Germany gets it and Belgium loses it. Do you ask why the Belgians

who built this African Empire and made it prosper should lose this colony? For no other reason than to give it to Mr. Hitler's friends in Germany.

One could call Mr. Culbertson names. Let us not. He is certainly the best bridge player among the amateur world politicians and so excellent a skill deserves respect. There is however one most remarkable thing he has in common with his confrères: his "plan," like all other similar plans, results in giving to Germany exactly what, or even more than, it wants.

Reading his document is certainly a depressing experience. It has, however, one result, and that is to confirm the opinion of everyone endowed with common sense and who has a little experience of world affairs, that all these worldwide dreams should be distrusted, for their very basis is vicious. It will be enough of a task for all men of good will to win a peace which will crush Germany and its satellites, Italy and Japan, in such a way that the next generation will not have to go through the same mess we have already experienced twice. Little do we care if, in that process, Hans Müller will have to tighten his belt for a decade or Gretchen Schmidt will float around in her dirndl.

No generation will reproach its fathers for being harsh on a militaristic and bullying people who twice in 25 years not only set the world afire but at the same time tried to pervert everything fine and decent in mankind. Let us not be too ambitious; we might turn out to be as unrealistic as Renner and Culbertson. We should be practical, with a primary objective of crushing the dragon and his seed so that at least 25 years from now children may go out in the woods to listen to the whispers of the forest and

enjoy life and liberty instead of creeping through the jungle and sandhills to throw grenades in the enemy's foxholes.

Anything that diverts us from this aim should be considered harmful and in some cases even criminal.

THE GOVERNMENT-IN-EXILE AND THE ALLIES

1.—Has the Moor Done His Work?

The Moor has done his work,
the Moor may go . . . SCHILLER; *The Fiesco.*

WHEN THE LATIN POET OVID WAS EXILED TO THE Danube region (no waltzes at that time) he sadly noted: "Exile is death." When Victor Hugo was biding his time on the island of Jersey, he wrote above the entrance of his temporary home: "Exile is life."

This contradictory evidence becomes less confusing when we see how exile to some people means the end of everything they stood for in life while for others it is just another incubation, the pre-natal period of an intellectual or moral rebirth.

However, when applied to a government, the idea of exile can not be explained in such psychological terms. There are indeed two things involved in the notion of "a government-in-exile." First, the government represents a group of people, a national community from which it has been physically severed and second, it is composed of definite individuals. In its first aspect it is a permanent institution, the very symbol of the country's continuity or

claim to continuity. In the second aspect it is a changeable assembly of men who may resign, die or be dismissed. It is an institution and as such it suffers from the weakness or profits by the greatness of its members.

In normal times when the government resides in its country the institution as such is rarely attacked, while the faults and merits of its members are abundantly discussed. He who throws a member of a government out of office is not a criminal, he may indeed be a good patriot. Only when the changes in government become so numerous as to caricature the institution itself will attacks on the government-of-men become a public nuisance and endanger the commonweal.

When, through physical compulsion, the government of a country resides outside its borders, it is in exile. The nation that permits it to operate on its territory thereby recognizes the legal status of the exiled government and implicitly blames those who have rendered its normal existence impossible.

An exiled individual, whether he feels as Ovid or as Hugo did, is most of the time a pathetic figure. He has to depend on foreign hospitality, sometimes even on public charity. Generally he is a burden. It often takes him a long time to adapt himself to the language, the customs, the surroundings of his place of residence. He is not a permanent member of the community, and therefore his usefulness is often doubtful and always limited.

The numerous foreign governments now residing in London or elsewhere in Allied territory have always resented being called either governments "in exile," "refugee-governments" or "Free" Belgian, "Free" Norwegian or "Free" Dutch Governments. Whether their legal sov-

ereign resides with them or not, they are the authentic expression of the free electorate. The Belgian Government was elected in 1938 and appointed by King Leopold. On the day of the invasion it was given a mandate by both Houses to resist and continue the war till the national territory should be liberated; it contained representatives of the three great traditional political parties and was indeed a government of national union.

It is the destiny of these men to represent the oppressed fatherland among the Allies and the neutrals, to consolidate all national resources which are not in the enemy's hands, and to assure the continuity of the national idea against tyranny and murder.

Like many others, the Belgian Government on its arrival in London had no easy task. Only a limited number of officials had been able to follow it, the number of ministers was small and of course they lacked even the essential documentary machinery with which to conduct their offices. They had to provide immediately for 20 to 30 thousand of their countrymen who had fled to Great Britain, they had to start organizing an army and participating in the Allied war activities in every sector. They did so with their own funds, taking care of the unemployed, establishing schools, creating hospitals for the diseased and veterans. They also exercised their authority over the Belgian Congo, directing its tremendous war effort.

Their main object was however to assure Belgium's position in the world. In recent years we have all had ample occasion to find out that a nation does not essentially consist of a territory, or of a language; that its existence depends on something immaterial and far above physical limitations—its will to survive, its faith in its own

destiny. The foreign Governments in London exist above all to express this fundamental idea of their enslaved compatriots. What Prime Minister Pierlot in London says in well weighed words, the Belgian patriots inside Belgium proclaim with their martyrdom and with their blood. It is evident to all Belgians that the essential function of their government in London is indeed to render possible that pathetic dialogue between the voice of Free Belgium in the Allied countries and the anonymous, multitudinous echo that comes from the brutally oppressed but heroic fatherland.

It has been one of the main themes of German propaganda to attempt to discredit these men, to represent them as fugitives, as deserters. Should they have stayed in their country? Another question will give the answer: What is the prestige and the significance of the Danish Government now operating under Nazi control in Copenhagen?

Are the exiles deserters? The answer is: was life in bombed London physically preferable to life in occupied Belgium? No, the Germans attacked the Belgian Government as they attacked the Dutch, the Norwegian or the Polish Government because these men were the trustees of the national idea in the Allied camp, because they were still able to speak to their countrymen and tell them: "Do not despair. Belgium lives on and will rise again."

It is a most remarkable phenomenon that even the grossest insinuations of the Germans finally penetrate public opinion of the Allied nations, at least to a certain extent. To Voltaire is attributed the saying: *Mentez, mentez, il en restera toujours quelque chose.* Go ahead, lie, some part of what you say is bound to stick. Three years ago when England was in danger the Nazis kept

hammering at the idea that the Governments in London did not represent their peoples, that they were just a British window-dressing to impress the world, that they were traitors and had no authority whatsoever. After three years we now find in many American publications and in some English ones the same idea expressed approximately in the same terms. This comes at a moment when the tide of the war seems to have turned, when the aid and assistance of the small Allied governments does not seem any longer so essential. It comes at a moment when a number of people in the free countries are defending a policy of cooperation with scoundrels and fascists, not on a basis of temporary expediency, but on a basis of complete amoralism and revolting cynicism. In 1940 the "exiled" governments were considered the outstanding representatives of the moral issues of this war. Today some irresponsible elements picture them as political liabilities.

The small Allied governments would be utterly devoid of self-respect if they did not resent this reversal of the attitude of a part of Allied public opinion. They know that those who try to confuse the government with the persons who compose them are not the spokesmen of the United States nor of the British Commonwealth. But their experience as exiles has made them well aware of the possible results of Nazi propaganda.

In 1940 Mr. Goebbels used to shout over the radio that the exiled governments were a bunch of adventurers. Today Allied journalists question the authority of these groups and ask: What do they represent? The answer to that question has been already given: they represent the soul of their country, its will for independence and autonomy. In the case of Belgium they express the basic principle

of the Belgian constitution: *the permanence and continuity of Power.*

Belonging to a government-in-exile is not exactly a pleasant job. Even in time of peace, Jefferson called it, "a painful, a thankless office." In time of war, it is worse. Many of the men who belong to the "exiled" governments have families who are in German hands. Nevertheless, they fight and organize the fight of their nationals against Nazism, they speak out clearly and loudly; they encourage their countrymen to resist, they brand the traitors, they are the living, free conscience of their fatherland. Not one of them will hang onto his office after his country is liberated. All of them are anxious to let democracy have its way, to let the people designate their rulers and leaders. But it is all too clear that those who try to discredit these men are the same who hope that post-war Europe may be ruled by a small number of industrial and military plutocrats in a nice authoritarian way, in the name of an "order" that to every decent man seems despicable and antiquated because it would be nothing else than a camouflaged Nazism, a farcical Fascism.

The hundreds of Belgian patriots who die every month in Belgium do not die that Mr. X or Mr. Z may be Prime Minister after the war, that Mr. Y may stay in office as Minister in Charge of Lost Ashtrays. They die that Belgium, which means its institutions, its laws, its moral and intellectual personality, may survive. Between these men and the exiled government there is a solemn solidarity. The retarded echo of Nazi propaganda we hear sometimes will not succeed in breaking it, for it is sealed with

the token of supreme Belgian devotion, with Belgian blood.

2.—"Tighten Your Belts"

FOR ANY PERSON OF A MODERATELY SOUND MIND, THERE is little doubt that there will always be a number of reasons in this world why an honest man's stomach should turn with nearly unbearable disgust. Of course, we all expect a better world to grow out of the shambles of the present one, and we all fervently hope to see, with our own eyes, the prelude to this improvement in world and private affairs. Otherwise how could we go on living?

The balance between our moral and social indignation (those who do not react are not worth talking about) and hope in a better future is what maintains us on a level. If the first scale goes up, we become despicable bourgeois; if the other one fails we may become desperados. This is, of course, a highly simplified view of humanity, and it is quite certain that most people are not aware of these mental and psychological acrobatics, but if you don't watch them, at the drop of a hat, they'll turn a car over on a street-corner and make a roaring good fire out of it.

In wartime all immediate issues are simplified to an

extreme. How could it be otherwise? The government has to explain things to everybody, to the Nobel prize winners as well as to the hillbillies. The press does the same. In the pulpit it is no different. Everything is done according to the necessities of the moment. It may occur that in this process of simplification the shades and hues which are above all the delight of the cultured and intellectual people get lost. A number of highly emotional and artistic people react by becoming disgusted with the official truth. As a rule it all ends in a moderately publicized lawsuit, the ruin of an obscure leftwing weekly and, later on, a rather annoyed feeling on the part of the judge who had to sentence these young "radicals." In the meantime they have all become sedate and useful citizens.

But the majority of the people emotionally accept this simplified diet. They are told why they are at war, and there is little doubt that the issues are stated clearly and honestly as far as the enemy is concerned. The Germans are called Huns, but then again one among the eighty million does something decent and the public wonders if the official generalization can stand a close scrutiny. But one day a man escapes from a concentration camp. He tells you that one of his fellow prisoners tried to escape at night. He was caught and killed. He lay naked on the earth of the prison courtyard. The Germans ordered all the prisoners to rise and pass by the victim. The court was lighted by only a few torches; their flickering glare fell on the victim and on the haggard faces of the eight hundred men who passed and were ordered to look closely. One of them, unable to bear the sight, turned his head away. The Germans took him by his ears and dragged him as close as possible so that he might see the

horror of a mutilated and bruised corpse. That night this man became crazy and was subsequently killed. The place was Breendonck in Belgium, and the witness is ready to testify that this actually happened. Incidents like this have happened thousands and thousands of times in the camps and dungeons of Hitler and Mussolini (without known protest from His Majesty the King-Emperor). Such a story is enough to have us all go back to the simple truth that the enemy is ruthless, hateful and despicable and that as long as he is not crushed, there is no need to bother with variegated hues. Our sense of indignation is given plenty to chew on in wartime.

But how will we make out when peace comes? Will the simplified version of world relations, which is the pattern of our wartime thinking and emotions, find its counterpart in a simplified peace, a simplified punishment of the criminals, a simplified restoration of damages inflicted? Of course not, because peace—no matter how much it may displease the fascists of all countries—is the normal state of mankind. In peacetime a number of factors have to be taken into account before a clear solution results. That is why there are so few clear-cut solutions. Every man invested with authority is in constant danger of acquiring a Hamlet complex. Cowardice lurks under every official desk. Doubt lies like dust over every office file. If anybody should prevent the Golden Age from materializing, it would be exactly those in whom we put our greatest hope and trust. One might ask: "Should they really be expected to make all our dreams come true?" As the bureaucrats would say: "The answer is in the negative."

This much can be said for the rulers of this earth—they

are slowly but carefully preparing a peacetime atmosphere in which our indignation against the enemy is to be replaced by our disgust at what happens in our own countries. We had the Darlan experience which fortunately came to a moral end. Since then we have had a number of smaller shocks, all intended to prepare our safe return to a world of compromise and haggling. One of the most striking signs of the approaching peace is the increased casualness with which smaller countries seem to be treated by the bigger ones. It is only human, of course, and small countries exist so that they may be bullied by their enemies and pushed around by their friends, but one has to get accustomed to the idea after the wartime honeymoon. The most violent instance of this tendency is the attitude some people in London, as in Washington, take toward the governments-in-exile. Against all odds these groups have kept faith for four years. They came to Great Britain when that country was clinging to the ropes, groggy and practically defenseless. They came because they had at least as much faith in the British as the British themselves. They were well received. They were the representatives of oppressed and heroic nations, and no questions were asked! But now, say the papers, "The exiled governments are finding themselves under closer scrutiny." It is pointed out that many of them have "pronounced rightist tendencies," etc., etc. Of Belgium it is said that her "loyalty to the sovereign reigning when the war broke out provides a traditional way back to normalcy."

It seems that the Allies want to find out if and to what extent the men in London represent their countries. That is what the closer scrutiny is intended for. These men have been separated from their constituents for an

abnormally long time. It is, however, a fallacy to pretend that a democratic government ought to follow day by day the slightest changes in public opinion. A democratic government is not obliged to live with a razor at its throat under the threat of its being cut at the slightest hint of some provincial editor. Democratic government is a majority rule, and the weaknesses of the system, as demonstrated in the last decades, are essentially due to an oversensitiveness to local and temporary shifts in public opinion.

In the case of Belgium, a "closer scrutiny" has rather an amusing sound. Of the seven Cabinet members, four, including the Prime Minister, spent the first war in the trenches, another one tried to join the army and landed in a German prison camp. All of them were in active service. All have shown their mettle and it seems that, even without any official green light, they should be entitled to speak for their country.

Furthermore, they belonged to a government of national union which could count on the votes of more than 75 per cent of the two Houses. By a unanimous vote of Parliament, they were entrusted with the task of pursuing the war to a victorious end. They are accomplishing this task, and if any further proof of their right to do so is needed, it could be found in the Nazi newspapers of Belgium which attack the Belgian Cabinet with ever-increasing violence.

Do they have "pronounced rightist tendencies?" If so, they should be perfectly entitled to have them, or shouldn't they? Indeed, they represent *all* shades of Belgian national opinion, left, right and center. But at no moment since May 10, 1940, has it been evident that they were

in disaccord on any subject. They have worked harmoniously and in full confidence together.

It is another result of wartime oversimplification of issues to divide the world between left and right, those to the left being the angels, those to the right being the seed of Beelzebub. Is it as simple as all that? Even in *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* it is not. Belgium was a democratic country, very jealous of her democratic institutions and extremely critical of anything that might lead to personal power and influence. Was it a "leftist" country, as that word is generally understood? Not very likely. It was a progressive country with remarkable social legislation, with a strong Socialist Party and no Communist Party to speak of, but on the whole it was rather conservative in thought and behavior.

As in every normal nation the elections allowed a pendulum movement in order to correct exaggerated tendencies to the left or to the right. If "left" is synonymous with democratic (which it is not, necessarily or completely), then Belgium has been a leftist country since about the year 1250. That may satisfy the "scrutinizers."

Repeatedly Prime Minister Pierlot has made it clear that Belgium would return to normal as soon as the Germans were pushed back from the national territory. It is with no little pride that he could outline this program. He did not need to promise drastic reforms or a political new order. He and his colleagues—just like the members of the other governments-in-exile—know that they have done a very difficult thing during this war, a job that took as much stamina as staying in the trenches for years: to speak for an oppressed people when it was wounded and beaten, to protect its interests against enemies and even against

friends, to stand unmoved and confident when adversity pressed hard, to remain calm and dignified even when those who hailed the arrival of allied governments, and who enjoyed their moral support and their material assistance, turned on these very men to scrutinize and investigate their opinions on the eight-hour work day or on private ownership of cocktail shakers and bejewelled thimbles.

In French they say that in this world of ours we need "un estomac bien accroché." They mean more than a good stomach; they mean something like a "well-suspended stomach." There is no doubt that peace is already near, for those who decide on the course of our planet have already turned around in their seat of command, warning us that we descend from the stratosphere of pure and simple antitheses. We are getting down to earth again, everything is going to be difficult, and therefore the pilots look at us with a little compassion and say, "Tighten your belts."

Well, we can take a hint.

FEEDING OR STARVING THE OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

1.—That They May Live . . .

In an article from London dated November 12th, 1942 and published in the *N. Y. Herald Tribune,* Geoffrey Parsons, Jr. writes:

"It is significant that the exiled governments, who are more zealous in looking out for the rights of the people back home and who are guided very much by information they get from inside their own lands, are not among the advocates of sending relief to the occupied countries. They, and even the hard-boiled Ministry of Economic Warfare, are entirely in favor of giving relief if any formula could be devised by which relief could be given without helping the Germans. No such formula has yet been brought forward. When food parcels have been sent to individuals in German-held territories, the rationed foods in the parcels have been marked off on the ration books of the recipient, thereby easing the food burden of the Germans."

As far as Belgium is concerned, the statement in the first sentence of this quotation is not correct. The immense majority of the Belgian people, more than eight million of them, are at present under German rule. Only 30,000 of them managed to escape. They are, each and every one of them, the authorized spokesmen for their suffering countrymen. Through secret channels, they are indeed in

daily contact with their oppressed compatriots. They have, since the fall of France, done everything in their power to help the Allied cause, putting Belgium's and the Belgian Congo's economic and military power at the complete disposal of the United Nations. They have shunned no sacrifice, and they have done their duty as well in the battle of Britain as in the battle of Africa. Belgian women and men have died bravely by aiding British pilots forced down in Nazi territory. Thousands of Belgians have been imprisoned for giving aid and comfort to British soldiers or British emissaries. Where their countrymen in Belgium are concerned, they have a right to express their opinion and to claim treatment for their fellow countrymen corresponding to the sacrifice they themselves are making.

Speaking in the name of our brave dead, of the millions of Belgians ready to act with the same disregard for their lives and safety, the refugee Belgians in England as well as elsewhere, have a right to be heard by the United Nations.

It has been said over and over again that the food situation in Belgium is nearly as bad as in Greece. Hundreds of reports smuggled out of Belgium have confirmed the fact that a whole generation of Belgians, entire strata of society, are severely suffering from undernourishment and tuberculosis. It is known that the normal person needs about 2,300 calories a day. According to the *official* rationing, the Germans are now allowing about 1,200 calories a day to the Belgians, but it is known also that they have never received that amount during the last three years. The rationing is theoretical, and does not correspond to reality. The Nazis have repeatedly avowed this fact. The reports on mortality in Belgium and the strictly scientific

studies on the health of the Belgian population made by responsible Red Cross authorities in Sweden give a most dramatic picture of Belgium's present condition.

To a certain, although small extent, the black market offers people a means of warding off starvation. In order to provide for a more or less normal diet, well-to-do Belgians spend approximately the value of $1,000 a month. It is evident that only a very small minority can afford this and only for a relatively short time. But the bulk of the population has not the means to patronize the black market. The average small employee in Belgium has a monthly salary of 1,500 francs, the equivalent of $50. This is a far cry from the $1,000 he needs for a normal diet. The leaders of the Belgian unions have proven that most of the 600,000 Belgian workers who went to Germany did so in order to avoid starvation.

The Belgian government has been trying for more than three years to obtain the authorization of the Allies to send at least milk and vitamins to Belgium, without success. Only some medical supplies were sent.

It has been said that those inside Belgium do not want food sent to them for fear that the Germans might take away part of it. There is no truth in such a statement. It belongs to that kind of rhetorical heroics which third-rate speakers invent after a copious dinner. There was no objection but rather universal applause for Belgian relief in the first World War. However, Colonel House notes in his *Intimate Papers* that Mr. Hoover complained to him in 1916 that the Germans did not live up to the German-Anglo-French agreement and were buying Belgian cattle with money from tribute levied on the Belgians.[1] This,

[1] *The Intimate Papers of Colonel House,* Vol. II, p. 123.

however, did not stop the Commission for Relief. No Belgian, of sound mind and with his heart in the right place, living on the fat of the land in the United States, enjoying liberty, food and shelter, will prevent anybody from sending food to his countrymen even if the Germans should take a small part of it away. There is possibly no formula, as Mr. Parsons says, "by which relief could be given without helping the Germans," but it is public knowledge that the Allied Governments send food packages to the thousands of Allied prisoners in Germany. These parcels, of course, relieve the burden imposed on the Germans by the presence of Allied soldiers and, fortunately for these prisoners, the "hard-boiled British Ministry of Economic Warfare" does not object to this policy.

It is a remarkable fact that other peoples' miseries are not realized before we are physically confronted with them. The most clever reasoning, the most astute statistical and economic demonstration of strategic objections against feeding at least the children of the occupied zones will vanish into naught whenever one is confronted with the picture of Belgian children who have been sent to Switzerland, hollow-eyed and emaciated, innocent victims of a terrible drama.

When it came to feeding the Greeks, no military objections were raised and everyone was gratified to know that at least some Allied aid was going regularly from Turkey to Greece every week. When the French children in unoccupied France were fed by the American Quakers, everybody felt happy about it, although everybody knew that the Germans were draining the resources of unoccupied as well as occupied France.

Small food parcels have been sent for two years now

by individuals, and at great expense, from Portugal to Belgium. The quantities are extremely small and the number of packages limited. The amounts sent to Germany through the same channels are ten times as big. The Belgian Government has received thousands of letters, even from wealthy people, expressing to those who sent these packages, an undying gratitude for a small can of sardines or a couple of ounces of tuna fish. There is no proof whatsoever that the Germans deduct that food from the normal rations.

If the war drags on, the whole question is whether the United Nations are fighting to liberate oppressed peoples or to conquer a vast cemetery sparsely inhabited by some wealthy people who survived the ordeal. To all Belgians outside of Belgium, each one of them to a certain extent responsible for what happens to their country during the war, the answer to this question is obvious.

1.—*Nazis Are Germans*

"When the State authority says two and five make eight, that should be believed against all evidence." LUTHER

THERE'S NO USE BEATING AROUND THE BUSH OR DODGing the issue. An important section of the American people makes a clear and systematic distinction between Nazis and Germans, while the overwhelming majority of the people belonging to the small allied nations does not.

In other words, when the German authorities execute a dozen hostages in Europe, the Belgians, the Dutch, the Poles or the Greeks say: "Those dirty Huns are at it again," while a good number of Americans will comment: "That military Nazi clique is indeed terrible and unworthy of the German people."

Some time ago a group of distinguished writers discussed whether hatred for the enemy should be systematically cultivated. There were partisans of "hot hatred" and there was a group in favor of "cold or calm hatred." There were also those who refused even to consider the idea of hatred. Feelings ran high and the meeting adjourned just in time to avoid a free-for-all fight.

Mr. John Steinbeck, a most talented novelist, has come out very strongly in favor of old landladies' in occupied Europe killing their German officer boarders with long black-enameled hatpins; and, in his most recent publica-

tion, another outstanding author, Mr. Ernest Hemingway, proposes sterilization of all Germans which, he says, is "little more painful than vaccination."

Looking over this brief and probably incomplete panorama of lunatic antics, one must conclude that there is some confusion about one of the vital issues of the war: Whom are we fighting? A restricted number of gangsters in Germany, Italy and Japan, or the peoples led and misled by those cliques?

For Italy, the answer has already been given. Allied propaganda has constantly discriminated between Mussolini and his bravoes, and the Italian people everyone knows as industrious, charming and likeable individuals, the exact opposite of the bombastic megalomaniacs appointed by that distinguished numismatist King Victor Emmanuel.

But there are the Germans or Nazis, or Nazi-Germans? Should we hate them? Separately or in bulk? Should we fulminate against Goebbels and Himmler but feel friendly toward Hans Müller and Frau Elsa Zapfenstreich? Many, let us say most, Americans say *"Yes."* But how about the Poles? Just ask them who killed hundreds of thousands of their countrymen—the Nazis or the Germans? Just ask the Belgians if the inhabitants of Visé, Tamines, Louvain, Dinant, Aerschot and a dozen other places were killed in 1914 by pre-Nazis or by "eternal" Germans?

The answer is obvious.

The Europeans have a historical knowledge of the Germans; Americans have more of a social knowledge of them. The Europeans saw modern Germany coagulate; they know its philosophy and the effect this philosophy has had on German politics. In France and in Great Brit-

ain philosophy does not seem to affect political life very deeply. These countries have their wisdom, an accumulation of experience, of classical thought, of scepticism and Christianity. But the cultural background of the Germans, to which they have reverted so often, is the bloody scenery of the Nibelungen, the horrible company of Wagner's incestuous, gloomy, villainous demi-gods. In Germany the philosopher has always been an authority. The enormous mass of German dwarf states, united through the nationalistic principle, needed a philosophy. Since Germany united it has never had anything else but a philosophy of power, of superman, of crushing might. There is no other modern German philosophy.

Americans are too little aware of all that. They refer to Goethe, even if they haven't read him, and they certainly put you on the spot when they ask you if life would be worth while without Mozart, an Austrian. (It is readily agreed it would not.) Furthermore, they knew a German skier who was a very decent young man and Herr Schmidt, the baker of Yorkville, has never done anybody any harm in his long and eventless life. Germans are *people* and therefore. . . .

It is however quite certain that Germans are Nazis. People have the government they deserve. When in 1936 Degrelle, the Belgian Quisling, started his Fascist movement, the terrain was undoubtedly well prepared. Unemployment ran high; the middle classes were restless. Out of 202 deputies he got 22 of his men in Parliament, but, when the Belgians became aware of the Fascist menace, they reacted quickly, and in the following elections the Rexist Party was reduced to four members out of 202 seats in Parliament.

Now consider the Germans! Seventeen million of them picked Mr. Hitler as their man. His was the strongest party in Germany, and therefore his was the power and the authority. He is a perfectly legal ruler, a fully authorized spokesman of the German people. The political majority that designated him knew that he used murder as an argument in debate, that his most brilliant henchmen were homosexuals and that his troops sang that wonderful marching song in which the Golden Era is announced for the moment when "Jewish blood will flow from the knives." They knew perfectly well that the ideology of Hitler and his gang was an ideology of assault and robbery, of sadism and perversion . . . for Germany's greatness.

In politics, there is something like moral complicity. The bell always tolls for everyone. It was one of the best traits of the French character, for instance, that wherever in the world an injustice was committed, wherever an innocent man was wronged by class prejudices be it in Patagonia, in Boston or in Ankara, one was sure to see thousands of indignant Frenchmen walking down the thoroughfares of Paris and Marseilles in protest. No one in this world has a right to isolate himself. Being what John Donne so beautifully called "a piece of the Continent, a part of the maine," everybody is linked in responsibility for everything that is wrong in the world. Every decent European was ashamed when the Allies sold out Czechoslovakia, but nobody did anything about it. We are all punished for our cowardice, for our lack of solidarity. The Germans have admitted Nazism; those who did not help it, did not fight it. All the established parties "ducked," everybody seemed to agree on the bargain: let's

take Hitler and see what we can get out of him. Mr. Thyssen is in a position to inform you exactly about the results.

Far from being allergic to Nazism, the German is partial to it and therefore Nazism thrived and flourished in Germany. For nearly ten years, Nazism has exploited Germany's original sin, has developed Germany's worse instincts. Apparently, only a score of Germans have protested against this policy. Millions and millions of young Germans are perfect Nazis, for, as a people, Germans have never proved to be unruly individualists like the Dutch and the Belgians, the French or the British.

There is no reason to dissociate Germans from Nazis. The Germans themselves do not do it. I once was browsing in a German bookshop in Wittenberg. It took me more than an hour. I finally was driven out by the constant repetition, maybe 300 to 400 times, of "Heil Hitler" by the shopgirl, an innocent-looking, homely creature who up to 1933 had always said Grüss Gott and who now invoked Hitler's name every 15 seconds in greeting or parting. No people in the world other than the Germans can cede their individuality like that. They have become heathen, dervishes of the Braunau Moloch, intoxicated, inebriated with their own thick mental brew.

You can do only one of two things with them after the war: either kill them or convert them. It took them a couple of centuries to pervert themselves. It may take as long to cure them. Now that the "white man's burden" is being lifted from his stooped shoulders, another load is heaped on him: the duty and the dire necessity, after having beaten the Germans, of curing their minds of the horrible poison Hitler's witches, Goering, Goebbels, Ros-

enberg and Himmler have been distilling into the minds of the people from whom sprang Goethe, Haydn, Mozart and Bach—four gentlemen whose fathers fortunately did not meet Mr. Hemingway on their road to posterity.

2.—*The Imputation Theory Is Right*

We disagree most heartily with that part of the otherwise interesting resolution passed by the Catholic Association for International Peace (Washington, D. C., April 29, 1943) in which it is said that: "The 'imputation theory' which holds that all the members of a political community automatically share in the guilt of their criminal rulers is illogical and immoral." This statement was made by the Association in order to warn against a collective punishment of the Germans for, it maintains, "in all probability this would be neither practicable nor conducive to the common good of the nations. And it would be unjust to the majority of those punished."

In order to analyze the fallacy of this reasoning, we should go back a little in history. Two centuries ago many European countries were still enjoying, if one may say so, the rule, by divine right, of kings. The ruler was

a gifted man or a lunatic according to Providence, and his subjects had little or no means at all of expressing their disapproval of his Majesty's policies and wars. Only the very few living in the sovereign's immediate neighborhood could remonstrate. But the prestige and the actual power of the ruler were so great that very few courtiers ever dared to lift their voices in the interest of the commonwealth. Only the clergy could and would from time to time gather enough strength to admonish the sovereign on his misdeeds, and even these reprimands had to do strictly with their ruler's private and personal affairs. To save the country from the king's folly, there was only one effective means—a palace revolution and a regicide. The enormous majority of the people, however, although suffering heavily and bodily from the results of the king's policy, had no way of expressing their opinion or influencing his decisions.

All this changed when people decided that power should derive from the free consent of the governed. However, the acceptance of this principle logically implied the recognition that all those consenting would be watchful that those who attained power through the people's endorsement would not abuse that power. Man was no longer a *subject,* he had become a *citizen.*

It has been one of the constant themes of Axis propaganda against democracy that it is ridiculous to think that if 51 per cent of the people feel Mr. A to be a good president as against 49 per cent who favor Mr. B, the 51 per cent are right; or, to put it as the Axis does, that, after all, 51 minus 49 equals two, and, therefore, two per cent of the people decide which way the country will go. Of course, reduced to this mathematical expression, the issue

is put in a false light, for everyone knows that no system is perfect, but that any system which takes into account the will of the majority is the best approximation we can get in this world. It is at least far superior to the primitive gamble on the possible genius or common sense of a hereditary ruler.

On the other hand, moralists of all times have argued about the real function of the state. Liberals and artists have a natural tendency to consider the state a mere necessary evil. Strongly individualistic nations have always wanted "as little government as possible." The state itself has a natural tendency to broaden its scope. It is constantly induced to do so by its own citizens, who want evils redressed and unfair competition curtailed; it is also tempted to do so by a natural propensity for the extension of its power. For the government essentially wants to keep order and peace, and the more power it has and uses, the more it hopes to avoid trouble.

A citizen of a democracy—even of a democracy that has gone astray, like Germany—has not only rights, but he has duties too. His relationship to the state is based on a silent contract. The government ensures his private security, protects him from violence of all kinds, puts him in a position to educate his children, to ply his trade, gives him the benefit of its cultural and material achievements which private initiative could not have attained. Every sociologist, as well as every theologian, tells us that we are social beings, that we have not the right to isolate ourselves from society, that socially as well as morally we are "part of the maine." Although careful not to deify the state or give it too much importance in our individual life, they make it clear that complete indifference on our

part towards the state is nothing less than criminal negligence. Therefore, popular wisdom has it that peoples have the government they deserve.

Let us be concrete. To what extent do 80 million Germans "share the guilt of their criminal rulers?" First of all, they put them in office, they willfully voted them in. They knew full well what Hitler and his gang were after; they knew his methods of "convincing" people. They were aware of the fact that he wanted to eliminate, by brute force, those who disagreed with him. They had read the cynical obscenities of *Mein Kampf*. Still they wanted this group of murderers, pederasts and sadists to run Germany. Should not the millions of Germans who said "Aye" to Mr. Hitler be punished for casting their votes in his favor? Should they not be given a chance to feel in their very marrow that the right to vote brings with it an obligation to vote well, not to give power to a man who openly disregards law, decency and honesty?

Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been wounded and killed by the Germans in this war. This has not been done by a couple of subalterns. It was done by *thousands* of men. Concentration camp victims have been tortured by thousands of Germans. The food of occupied countries has been stolen from the starving children through a highly organized German administration. Of course, the officials and military men were only obeying orders. But so was the Luftwaffe when the fliers were told to kill 10,000 Belgian women and children on the roads in order to create panic. They were good, obedient boys, those pet children of Hermann Goering. But will they all get off scot free? Are those anonymous multitudes who insult and

injure allied prisoners in Germany to have their little fun without a just reward?

It is evident that one can sin through omission and we have all been told that patriotism is a virtue. Sound patriotism demands that the citizen check on his rulers. If, through cowardice or through negligence, he permits Jews to be beaten to death in the streets of Berlin, foreign workers to be transformed into slaves, Belgian and Greek children to starve and freeze while their food and fuel is stolen, every decent thought and feeling of man to be publicly insulted by the government, he has a certain responsibility in all that. How could it be otherwise, unless we proclaim that every man is an individual, strictly on his own, with no account to render except to his creator?

No, of course, it is different, and a very small incident will show why. In one of the Stalags (the German camps for allied prisoners) there were a number of Belgian and French soldiers. They were fine boys, generous and clean in their lives, good comrades, but after two years of starvation and ignominious treatment some of them gradually began to lose their human dignity. Sometimes their urge for existence became stronger than anything else. The Germans knew that and enjoyed it immensely. On Sunday afternoons, the people of the nearby village used to come to the camp and walk around the barbed wire fence. The men came, and the women in their prettiest dresses. The children were there too. From time to time these visitors would throw a small piece of hard, stale bread over the fence and watch the Belgian and French soldiers swoop down upon it and fight like dogs to get hold of that precious food. There they stood, these "innocent" Germans,

enjoying the degradation of the enemy. They did him no harm. No, they even gave him bread to eat, but when the war is over just ask one of those wretched people who had to fight their friends and comrades for a small chance of keeping alive, ask them if the Germans who organized this Sunday afternoon amusement should enjoy "the benefits of democracy," or if they should not be punished in their heartless minds and in their obese bodies.

Even those who will have forgiven the cruelties inflicted upon them, and who will have attained serenity, will answer you that no crime should go without punishment and that we have fought that justice may be done. A total crime deserves a total punishment. Those who consider this principle "illegal and immoral" are pleading not the cause of humanity, but the cause of the Germans who outraged the very name of Man.

1.—American Primers for Europe

A NUMBER OF AMERICANS SEEM TO HAVE THE IMPRESsion that their country's intervention in this world conflict should resemble the kind of act performed in the drama of the Roman decadence by the deus ex machina. When everything was in a mess, when the foolish, pathetic humans had hopelessly entangled themselves, when there was nothing left to the actors but to kill or die, then suddenly an ingenious contraption descended upon the scene, carrying a god or goddess who, in majestic phrases and with powerful simplicity, settled these earthly disputes. This done, the choir sang a nice piece of poetry saying that from then on everything in the world would be just fine and dandy.

Much in the same way, if we believe some naive planners, the Americans will come, see and conquer, and then, having sat down, they will tell everyone in the four corners of the earth what to do for the rest of their lives, with special attention devoted to Europe's education. Afterwards, some stage device will snatch these demi-gods to the skies again—an isolationist firmament probably—and the golden age of mankind will start at once.

If it could work out that way, we would be willing to start the applause this very moment, but it is a fact that whenever Europeans hear about America's educating or re-educating Europe, they feel ill at ease. They like to know exactly what it is all about, and they look for an answer to a number of elementary questions. Must Europe be educated? Who should do this job? Where should it start and should everyone get the same dose of education? Maybe some Europeans are already educated a little?

The *Chicago Journal of Commerce*—needless to say a really serious newspaper (did you ever hear of a journal of commerce being facetious?)—in its January 23, 1943, issue expounded the following view of the European situation:

"From the English Channel to the Russian border, all Europe is a seething mass of political corruption and deadly factions: their leaders feed on nothing but gunpowder and blood. With the exception of France, and perhaps Czechoslovakia, the peoples themselves know little about democracy in any form."

The author of the article feels that all Europe—except those two really democratic peoples he mentions—will resist "an American policy of the world as fiercely as they now fight against the Nazis or the Russians."

The recent inquiries into the extent of knowledge of American history among American students were not encouraging. It is indeed a pity that undergraduates should mistake Betsy Ross for a can-can dancer, but it is even more regrettable that enormities of the kind published by the Chicago newspaper should be put before the American reading public.

Whoever speaks of Europe as a whole falls into a Nazi

booby trap. As soon as Hitler had overrun—not conquered, mind you—a good deal of Europe, he started to speak in the name of Europe, as if all the achievements, throughout the ages, of France, Austria, Greece, Italy, the Low Countries, Spain and Scandinavia had been nothing but a prelude to the moronic wisdom and absurd chromo-art of Nazi Germany. He alone was defending the Sainte Chapelle of Paris, the Boboli gardens of Florence and the Athens Parthenon against the Anglo-Saxon barbarians. Everything the genius of Greco-Roman antiquity had brought forth, all that the spirit of Christianity had wrought on that Asiatic peninsula we call Europe, Hitler claimed and promised to "defend" as an entity, dominated and led by the Germanic spirit. But soon the outburst of resistance in each of the crushed countries proved his claims to be vain. According to the character of each land, passive resistance, organized sabotage or guerrilla warfare broke out; fires flared up in every corner of the continent; Nazi-Europe was a struggling giant kept down by millions of moral and intellectual dwarfs.

No, Europe is not a Nazi unit. It has always been a well-tempered clavichord, a delicate instrument, allowing the utmost fantasy of infinite modulations which alone are able to express the mood of the moment. It would not come into any American's head to discount the differences between his own south or north, between middle west or west coast. When rationing was first introduced in the United States, a Boston newspaper condescendingly declared: "Boston accepts rationing." Nobody cursed the Bostonians, for they are supposed to be that way, but it would have ill befitted the newspapers of Peoria to publish a similar declaration. It would not have been ac-

cepted. Neither would any existing European country agree to be an anonymous part of a characterless superstate. Individuality has made European countries great; every attempt to fuse and merge them completely has ended in disaster. The Romans found that out, as did Charlemagne's successors, Napoleon and recently Mr. Hitler.

Let us not discuss how much Czechoslovakia knows about democracy. France in 1940 seems to have known too much about it. But it is plain ignorance not to know about democracy in the Low Countries, in Scandinavia and in Switzerland. History shows that Belgium and Switzerland have been for at least five centuries completely dominated by the democratic ideal. During the time that the highly-centralized French state prevented all democratic feelings and aspirations, the cities and provinces of Belgium were dealing with their Spanish and Austrian masters on the basis of their old charters and their well-defined mutual conventions. Strangely enough, this truly democratic relationship between a dominated country and its rulers was wiped out by the French revolutionists, who discarded the old urban freedoms and applied to Belgium their highly centralized system of France proper.

Not only every region, but even every town of Belgium has maintained its individuality. As a rule every town council is ready, at moments of crisis, to defy the government, and every burgomaster is tempted to oppose his minister.

Of course, the presence of kings and queens in Europe may have created some confusion in the mind of the *Chicago Journal of Commerce.* Perhaps it believes that these persons circulate from noon to midnight in regal

robes with a heavy scepter in one hand and a golden globe in the other, and that the slightest nod of their head sends a person to the gallows or raises him to the seats of the mighty.

Apparently it does not know that European monarchs are constitutional sovereigns, with far less power than that conferred by the American Constitution on the President in time of peace. It also ignores the fact that the peoples of European kingdoms are ready at any time to take up the old opposition between King and Nation, (which formed the basis of the French revolution) whenever the king or queen tries to overstep the boundaries of his or her constitutional rights.

It seems to us that none of the small European countries, and among them Belgium and Switzerland, the very cradles of Democracy in Europe, need any education at all. All the small European states, except the Nazi satellites, are politically alert. They proved before this war broke out that, even when they were thoroughly disgusted and discouraged by a perverted use of democratic principles, they still were vigorous enough to refuse to adopt the easy way out presented by a "strong" government. The only real failure of a democratic experiment occurred in Germany. Germany was given a chance to correct her errors and to organize on a democratic basis. We all know what happened. If the *Chicago Journal of Commerce* is going to send any postwar missionaries to Europe, we would strongly advise them to take the road to Berlin.

It would, of course, be insufferably self-complacent for Europe to pretend that her democracies have done such a wonderful job that they have nothing to learn from America. But they will not learn anything by compulsion.

They will choose from among the remarkable moral and political achievements of the New World those elements which can be adapted to their own mentality. When Benjamin Franklin came to Paris as Ambassador to the French Republic the personality alone of Poor Richard had an educational influence on his new surroundings. In the same way the presence of the average American in Europe after the war will be of tremendous significance. His forceful and simple optimism, his faith in life, his lack of mental fatigue and perversion will have a stimulating effect on the people he meets. Professional or apppointed American educators in democratic Europe would probably meet with little success, but the every-day American, with nothing more than the power of his personality and his unique outlook on facts and life, will be able to do a great deal of good. He will prove to Europeans that they can live and even be happy without the numerous mannerisms and archaic, senseless and false values which Europe still reveres; that one can even be "a powerful, uneducated person" and still find a solution for the many problems which Europe has come to consider as perpetual and unavoidable headaches. For that kind of education there is a dire need, and every one of the European democracies will be grateful in the end to receive such a gift from this brave New World.

III

THE REFUGEE LOOKS AT THE UNITED STATES

1.—*The Refugee's Thanks-giving Day*

EVERY REFUGEE'S MIDDLE NAME IS COLUMBUS, BUT after three years' residence here he has already explored the external appearances of American everyday life and has had sufficient leisure to get accustomed to the habits and the idiosyncrasies of the natives of this vast and bewildering country.

On Thanksgiving Day he will sit down at the American table and gratefully partake of the turkey. When his American hostess offers him, together with an irresistible smile, an impressive piece of pumpkin pie, he will eat it in silence. Please do not misunderstand him; it is not mere polite behavior on his part; it is plain gastronomical heroism.

The refugee has temporarily adapted himself to his surroundings. In the main he is not here to stay. He will go home as soon as possible. He will sail for Europe on the first boat, on that celebrated First Boat which, in refugee language, is at the same time a symbol and a program.

But although the refugee's situation is precarious, although he approaches this country's heart with a great

many mental reservations, he has undergone the spiritual impact of American life. A year ago you could still see him hurrying along Fifth Avenue, clasping as if for dear life a rented French novel, one of those cleverly written and poorly printed things, as if it were a last vestige, a priceless heirloom, of a vanishing world. He refused even to look for the spirit of America. His concessions to his environment were all on the material side, and he secretly feared to contaminate his thoughts and culture by anything so puzzling and alien as the spiritual expressions of that Anglo-Saxon Leviathan, the United States of America.

Then Pearl Harbor was attacked, and ever since the spread of the American eagle's wings has cast such a shadow on the earth that even the most self-centered European refugee has lifted his head and tried to understand the ultimate motives of American civilization and culture. If on Thanksgiving Day, he thanks the Lord for the simple gifts of food and shelter, he will also express his gratitude for a few spiritual gifts which he has plucked from the tree of American liberty.

First of all he was taught equality among men. He knew it, of course, he talked a lot about it, but he really had not seen it in daily practice. When he was in a frank mood, he would say that the French Revolution had muddled the job and that a great number of inequalities still existed. America taught him that there is no difference between men, that everybody is supposed to be equally human. America proves it by permitting no privacy to people in office and by showing an exalted ruler behaving and reacting as simply and naturally as the grocery boy. When, years ago, the refugee read that Americans ad-

dressed Marie of Rumania with a "Hello, Queen," he was shocked and amused. Now he understands that there was a touch of Shakespearian grandeur in the strange exclamation—"Oh! King!"—which a California sheriff who took charge of King Albert in 1919 constantly used. Equality! The refugee is of course clever enough to see that even the Americans have not attained it, but he knows that in every circumstance they strive for it and fight for it. Having no stake in the political game of this country, he is filled with awe and admiration when public opinion succeeds in forcing even the First Lady of the Land to abandon an official position, because of an incident involving a miserable $2,000 job. He knows that equality often means a forceful vulgarity, but he forgets all his regrets about refinement and distinction when, in Lewisohn Stadium on some balmy, summer night, he sits among 30,000 people and listens to Paul Robeson singing the magic songs of his people. His right-hand neighbor may be sipping a coca-cola, his left-hand neighbor may be chewing like a robot. The entire scene may look vulgar and cheap, but he understands why Walt Whitman so often and amorously resorted to the words "en masse."

He found out too that practically every American is a missionary, an idealist of sorts, an essentially generous individual. He knows that in the old world the underlying thinking of most responsible people is cynical, that crude egoism is often confused with wisdom. He very often heard Americans called naive. He found out that to a certain extent this remark may be correct. They are not resigned to a state of affairs. When anything is wrong, materially or mentally, they refuse to consider it inevitable. They are ready to start on a crusade right away.

Very often the improvements they preach may be merely external—better bath tubs and a tooth brush for everyone; they may be ignorant of the profound equilibrium which is the secret of many a "backward" race or country, but in fact the spirit that moves them is generous beyond limits and undoubtedly inspired by an idea far superior to its manifestations. Candide concluded that we should tend to our garden, "il faut cultiver notre jardin." The refugee marvels how much energy the average American has in store when it comes to weeding other people's gardens. He admires this idealism which seems to be contradicted by a great number of facts, but which is a most enticing characteristic of the American moral climate.

One of the refugee's poets said:

"Van alle reis terug nog voor de reis begonnen . . ."

"We have returned from every voyage before even starting out." It sounds like the testament of the Old World, Mr. Spengler's doomed continent, a most pessimistic view of this planet. Yes, the refugee is a pessimist. He knows history, he reads it, and it depresses him a good deal. He was terrified and shocked beyond words when Mr. Henry Ford proclaimed that history is bunk, but now he understands why the average American is suspicious of history. History tells us that everything is to be done over and over again, that the world has always been a dungheap of abuses, suffering and pain on which some rare flowers of exquisite beauty and fragrance grow, that the immense majority of men are fortunately anonymous, obscure creatures living a sordid life and dying an inglorious death. All the poets, all the novelists, all the painters of Europe, have been saying that for more than a century.

What happened to the refugee? As if one morning he awakes and a lofty breeze greets him, as if every bird had suddenly burst out singing, as if after a rainy winter Botticelli's spring maiden herself were walking towards him, so he discovered the extraordinary primitive optimism of the American, his absence of doubt and hesitancy, his belief in himself and in the goodness of life. Everyone in Europe had told him that happiness is a mirage, that optimism is the opium of innocents and of children. He discovered that the American Declaration of Independence makes a program out of the pursuit of happiness. The American government doesn't tell you you'll attain it, but it implies that you have a good chance. The refugee is entirely unable to escape from the contagion of this optimism. He feels that it is based on space, on richness, on youth, on an obscure but indestructible faith. He just sits there and admires. You can't protect yourself from Spring.

And finally he discovered one of the most wonderful contributions of the Anglo-Saxon world to civilization: the habit of understatement. It took him quite some time to realize how this habit implied the most subtle and the most intelligent criticism of the Latin and the Germanic mind. He had been told that the American newspapers were a collection of grossly exaggerated, sensational news items. They seemed to him, in the beginning at least, much like catalogues for Ladies' Underwear Stores, with some news items maliciously interspersed, but soon he discovered that in their polemical utterances they had nothing of the atrocious fishwives' vocabulary many European newspapers use. He discovered also that the emotional appeal in which European speakers and writers indulge so often and so shamelessly is almost completely absent in this

country. At last he had reached a country where political discussion does not logically lead to political assassination.

All this and lots more is in the refugee's mind on Thanksgiving Day. And if he silently swallows that monstrosity which Americans call pumpkin pie, he is nevertheless, at the same time, profoundly grateful for the fountain of youth which he has discovered in the U. S. A. and which has waters of four flavors: equality, generosity, optimism and moderation.

2.—*"A Song to the Lord in an Alien Land"*

ON THE FOURTH OF JULY, THE REFUGEE OPENED THE Good Book and read in the Psalms: *"Quomodo cantabimus canticum Domini in terra aliena?"* How shall we sing a song to the Lord in an alien land?

He may have read those words time and again when he lived in his homeland, but only now does he understand their full meaning. Only now does he feel that the question is directed at him, that it is personal and timely as well.

It tells him to sing. It reminds him that whatever his

conditions, there is still an abundance of reasons to praise the Lord. He lives in cramped quarters, he has become a pathetic nobody in the fantastic maelstrom of the American multitudes. In Europe, his whole town knew him. To thousands of his fellow citizens, he was a daily source of irritation or of comfort. He was obscurely sustained by the sympathy or the hatred which, to a thousand different degrees, his mere existence, his every act provoked. Instinctively people leaned on him, and he derived strength and comfort from them. When he spoke or wrote, he used to express only half of what he thought, because he knew that his listeners or readers would come half way. He did not have to play a full bar. A few notes were enough to have them feel the rhythm of his thoughts and feelings. He could speak rapidly and slovenly, for his language among his own people was more a collection of conventional expressions based on literary and other allusions than a fully articulate mode of speech. This would create an intellectual complicity, a spiritual comradeship that delighted everybody. When the sun was fierce he would not say: "It is hot." He would quote:

"Que ces vains ornements, que ces voiles me pèsent."

And one would see Phèdre, in all her moral distress, come to his rescue to avoid the vulgarity of a down-to-earth reflection on the temperature. Thus at every moment of his life, he resorted to everything the scholars, the artists, the men of action of his own people and of neighboring lands had written or done. He *belonged.* The main issues of life he seldom spoke about. All those among whom he lived had had the same basic upbringing. They either had found a solution to life's problems, or they had decided

that there was no solution and that life was either a joke —a poor one at that—or a gruesome drama. Therefore, he devoted his entire activity to the study and the expression of almost imperceptible shades and hues, in order by so doing to discover the structural secret of the world. He did not say: "I want to be happy. I have a right to be happy." He said: "I live, I bear it, but why do I bear it? What kind of a compromise with life is best?" He constantly wanted to advance into unknown regions. When he looked at the surrealists, he cared little for their circus-like antics; he was after the reasons why they so obviously revolted against the ethical and metaphysical certainties of their time. While he knew that every revolt has its meaning and usefulness, he was not shocked at their violent profanations. He waited patiently for the results. He could afford to be patient, for he did not imagine for one moment that he would, with his own eyes, see the Golden Age of Mankind.

In Ovid he read: "Only the mind cannot be sent into exile." His knowledge was bookish, and he was proud to know that the motto on the crest of arms of one of the first Belgian settlers in New York read: "He who although transplanted still sustains." He felt secure in any situation. He had a solution for every emergency.

But here he is now. Under his window children march and sing the Star Spangled Banner. There is a big parade going on. Bands boom in the distance. Every radio pours out speeches full of patriotic ardor. The day is glorious, the humidity covers him like a wet sheet. He should, he must "sing the Lord's song in an alien land."

The psalmist is kind about it. He lets him understand that there is something particular about singing the

Lord's song anywhere else but at home. It must be more difficult. The tone and the tune must be different. An easy thing in Europe has become quite an enterprise in the United States.

Let us listen to the refugee praising the Lord. He is not sitting under the willows of Babylon's streams. He sits at a table in his usual automat. It is his preferred locale, for he may behave there as if he "belonged." Nobody will find out. He slams his quarters on the cashier's desk, and he gets his nickels. He is fed in this wonderful deaf and dumb organization which dispenses with the spoken language. He praises the Lord for the coffee and for the fruit, for the beef and for the pie. He is humble and grateful. Everything he took for granted in Europe has become a miracle on these shores. Food is a wonder. There will be a stanza on food in his song. He will say grace for the milk and for the butter, for the ice cream and even for the pulpy bread.

While eating, he reads the newspaper—an unhealthy, intellectual habit—and he appreciates that it is a true mirror of human versatility. It tells him on the same page that thousands of people die of starvation and that Mrs. So-and-So has spent so many thousands of dollars on a rare Pekinese. Still it is far better reading such insanities than reading, by order, Mr. Goebbels' declamations. It shows him that in this country man is not essentially a "political animal" but a human, a weak, illogical combination of atoms moved by an unattainable principle which may drive him to the gutter or push him to the stars with whatever little collaboration he wants to afford destiny. He feels that in this country one does not have to "live for the State," but that in normal times at least one

is entitled to be the captain of one's soul (whatever that may mean exactly). It is man's unique privilege to waste his life as well as use it. That is what the refugee calls freedom. He sees it around him. He feels that dare-devil atmosphere which permeates everything in the United States, that nearly arrogant sense of liberty. If the spirit moves him, he will sing a nice stanza on that theme too.

He came here as a man who had achieved something, who had his place in the world, who knew a number of things and was ready to teach others. But when he tried to continue in his profession, he was told that he would have to submit to examinations and tests as if he were a boy in his 'teens. But he was a guest in this country, and some ruffian once told him that "beggars cannot be choosers." So he went back to the very primers of his art or trade, he rowed upstream, and he found out that in order to become useful in this society he had to become a homo novus. He had before him the discouraging example of Stefan Zweig who at the age of 60 decided that he could not renew his life entirely and committed suicide. He would not do such a thing. He wanted to become a new man, he even wanted to become an American. He said "even," not in a derogatory sense, but resigning his former nationality and allegiance seemed to him a kind of treason. One cannot become a Belgian, a Frenchman, an Englishman; one can only become a French, a Belgian or a British citizen. It takes a number of generations to make you a member of a European country. It takes the winds and the clouds, the words and the sounds, it takes the way children insult each other and lovers talk to each other under the elm trees. It takes the church bells over the provincial city at noon and the clatter of hoofs over the

country roads at night, it takes a thousandfold symphony of facts and reactions that impregnate one from the cradle to the grave. No human being past childhood can become a European. Therefore the refugee hesitated, but after a while he understood that America is different, that one can burn one's bridges behind one, that one can become an American by willingness to do so, by the acceptance of a way of life which is based on elementary decency, on solidarity and tolerance. He understood that this ideal was not yet attained, and with every decent American he shuddered when he saw the bloody "Mene, Tekel, Upharsin" written on the pavements of Detroit, a warning against the very powers of evil that brought Europe to the verge of its doom. There will be a couple of stanzas in his song in praise of tolerance.

It is already a long song, longer than the Twenty-third Psalm, and the refugee knows that the best prayers are the shortest. Let him have his coffee in peace. He knows now that the best way of singing his song to the Lord in a foreign land is neither to try to be as similar as possible to the people of this land, nor to be as different as possible from them. We will find him on the Central Park Mall in the afternoon singing with an atrocious accent "does that star-spangled banner yet wave . . .," still faithful to his old country but having hitched his wagon to the 48 stars of the Union and having praised the Lord who, helped by so many brave and good people, brought forth that miracle of unstable equilibrium, the hope of the world and refuge of all who at one time have despaired of man, these United States of America.

3.—Columbus Is My Middle Name . . .

ALL THAT THE REFUGEE KNEW ABOUT THE FOURTH OF July, before reaching these shores, was that year after year an ever-increasing number of people lost their eyesight or had their little fingers blown to bits by firecrackers on the eve of that great day. He used to read the statistics in his European newspaper and comment with a wise and cautious "Tsk, tsk."

But now he has been living in the United States for some years and, in one way or another, he has become a part of it. It took him some time to realize this and feel at home. Although everyone here seemed to welcome him with open arms, although he never heard so much as an unkind word, he had a hard time understanding precisely what people said and meant. It was not enough to know the English language to be able to converse with Americans. The first time a drunk called him a "kibitzer," he thanked him graciously, and when someone asked him if he belonged to the aristocracy or to the "hoi polloi" in his home country, he was completely at a loss. After dutifully absorbing his newspaper for months, he was de-

feated again by the laughter of a movie audience, when an actor said something very simple which later turned out to be an allusion to a nursery rhyme or some popular tune of the nineties. Already able to order a sirloin steak without linguistic accidents, he felt himself cruelly pushed back into utter linguistic oblivion and foreign darkness the day he tried to have a Brooklynite explain the rules of baseball to him. He understood that a language does not obey the dictionary but has its roots in thousands of manifestations; that it proceeds far more by allusion than by direct speech; that, in order to comprehend the American language, he had to know that Lorna Doone was not only a cookie but also the heroine of a sugar-coated nineteenth century novel.

He discovered also that the European dealers in antiques, not only those who sell fake Louis XVI chairs, but far more those who sell superficial Louis XVI ideas, had lied to him when they spoke about America as a country without culture. He had to learn about the flowering of New England as well as about the tranquil graciousness of Virginia, about the brutal epic of the railroad and the gold rush era as well as about the glory of the Alamo. He had to learn about Captain Ahab's ungodly search for the white Leviathan as well as about the eternal romance of the Wild Western centaurs. All these amazing, chaotic, contradictory elements, he had to add, melt down and get into one picture.

He had to learn about American men and women; about their unusual, direct approach to life, about their highly medieval concepts of kings, queens, and nobility. It took him some time to understand that the salesgirls who walk on Fifth Avenue as if they were participating in a

perpetual, panathenean procession were human beings, liable to tooth aches and who had been taught in high school how to carry their heads. He learned about the deep satisfaction of the American public when, after two years, it heard that a secretary of Otto von Hapsburg answered a caller over the telephone by saying that "His Imperial Highness was having breakfast at the pharmacy." He is still at a loss, however, to understand when and how exactly American boys and girls between eight and sixteen, the most atrocious wildcats and savages any country ever produced, break through their cocoons and emerge as likable young men and well-bred young women.

Above some license plates, he read the warning "America, Love it or Leave it," and although the imperative seemed a little rude, he agreed willingly; but, in order to love anything, you must know it, and, knowing it, become as similar to it as possible. Of course, he loves New York: the skyscrapers between 6 and 7 P.M., the streets which, at first, looked all alike and which are all different. He learned about the lovers walking in the park at night and carrying between them a portable radio crooning love songs—the height of mechanized romance. And how could he escape a sentiment of exhilaration and pride, far beyond any feeling of nationality, creed, or race, when he drove his car along the curves of the Hudson Parkway or the East River Drive, discovering at every turn of the road a sight more suited for gods than for men.

Knowing and loving the American village took him more time. It was not so easy to discover the charming simplicity of rural life, under the apparent vulgarity of its Main Street, the desolation of its unpretentious hotel and the queer drawl of the natives' language. But attend

ing a movie in a one-horse town taught him more about these people than many books. He found out that the audiences reacted as quickly and as humorously as those in a Paris faubourg who, more than any European audience, refuse to be taken in by tricks and languorous sex appeal. He discovered that the local newspaper of Peoria was as provincial as the *Gazet van Turnhout,* and that the soda jerker of Nantucket was as much a philosopher as the keeper of the King's hothouses in Laeken. Three times he has enjoyed the gold of the Indian summer and three times he has rejoiced in the deep, warm, brown color of the Connecticut barns in the blinding white of the snow.

Ingres, the greatest of all sketchers, told us that "to draw is to omit," in other words to leave out of a picture everything that is not essential and still keep the figure whole and three-dimensional. The refugee understood that American culture had omitted a great number of things to keep the essentials, and that from that process it derives its warm, unique, human, flavor.

Through knowledge or through premonition, all refugees felt this. The anecdote is now famous of the refugee in Lisbon who applied in vain for an American passport until the attaché, losing his temper, told him "Come back in ten years," to which the refugee politely replied: "Would it be better in the morning or the afternoon?"

The moral of this story is that America not only meant safety for that man but the end of his deep longing for the unattainable perfection of harmonious, democratic life. Every refugee in this country, however eager he may be to return to his homeland, which signifies for him above all his family and his friends, his books, his intellectual background, will be grateful when, on the Fourth

of July, rises what Stephen Vincent Benét has so aptly described as "the clear, impeccable light of American morning." For he knows that it will rise on a country no one can help loving, once he has taken enough pains to know it.

4.—Travelogue with a Moral

ULYSSES, COMING BACK FROM THE TROJAN WAR, TOOK almost nine years to reach his home town, Ithaca. From the standpoint of actual transportation, this extended delay could have been avoided. But, although longing for his faithful wife Penelope, he wanted to find out something about the world, to learn—as Homer tells us—"about many cities of men and their habits." And in fact he met nice people, dumb people, cruel and amorous people, but he was never more astonished than when he visited those most amazing economists of all times, the Lotus-eaters, a tribe of happy-go-lucky idlers, "who for all food have only a flower." He came back a wiser and not even a sadder man, for he was primarily interested in people.

So is Mr. Wendell Willkie, and his travelogue, *One World,* proves it. Mr. Willkie, who is not the idealistic simpleton the Nazis depict but a generous realist, has

brought one essential message back from his trip, just as Ulysses did: that we should know each other better, that we all have our good points and that the criterion of our value as humans and as members of a nation is our belief in the dignity of man and our resolution to defend that dignity.

Along those lines the Americans and the Belgians have already worked systematically for a quarter of a century. The Belgian-American Educational Foundation has sent since 1920 more than 477 Belgian students and scholars to the United States and about 225 Americans have spent their summers or a year or more in study and research in Belgium.

The Belgians learned many a lesson over here, but the first one, the most important one, was the magnitude, the power and the beauty of this country. An American can scarcely imagine how these boys and girls felt when they traveled through the States, a little homesick at night, but reaping out of every impeccable dawn a new and unknown city, be it gory and forceful Chicago, be it Denver, set like a jewel in its mountains, be it Pittsburgh, greener and blacker than El Greco's Toledo, be it Seattle, watching from its many hills the enchantment of its Sound, be it Washington from the air, like an incredible birthday cake, nicely partitioned by its avenues, or Williamsburg, that lovely, irresistible fake. They saw the cities, and they discovered the land, the rich loam of the farming states with their dark earth as rich as Flanders fields, the desert in bloom—to them an astonishing paradox—, the tumbleweed ballet over the dry plains, accompanying them for days on their trip, and the majesty of the prehistoric scenery of so many national parks. And who could blame

them for thinking that they had regained paradise when they felt, on their young and eager faces, the balm of the California orange groves and when they beheld in rapture and exaltation the Santa Monica bay, molded from the breast of fair and impavid Diana herself.

The Belgian students left New York and discovered the American village, its neat geometric churches, its schools, its main streets so comfortably identical in their provincialism and Chamber-of-Commerce ardor. They knew the people of America, so diversified in their apparent sameness, so full of faith in life, so incredibly certain of a better and greater future, so earnest in their unrelenting pursuit of happiness. They thought at first that this happiness consisted simply in owning a better car and an ever-increasing number of household gadgets, but going deeper into it, and brushing aside the superficial features of the ideal household as advertised in the slick magazines, the students understood that the very core of Americanism was a profound faith in human nature and a great leniency and tolerance toward evil and error which were regarded as temporary and unavoidable weaknesses. This essential message they took back to their homeland, they told it to their people. Some of them were later to become Prime Ministers, some university professors, some authors, businessmen, newspaper writers. All of them influenced Belgian public opinion on the subject of America. For the first time the Belgians heard a story different from the usual one told by news agencies eager for sensationalism. They were told that America was not a country of money-mad millionaires, marrying every hour on the hour, of desperate gangsters and spectacular suicidal maniacs, of childish tree-sitting students and marathon Bible readers.

No, they heard the immense murmur of the American multitude, harmonious and omnipresent, solemn and intimate, a murmur which a few years later was to be given voice and lyrical expression in the *Ballad for Americans.*

Even the many injustices of superficial visiting authors, the nonsensical monomaniac declamations on the U.S.A. of a great writer like Duhamel, could not harm the steady work friends of America were doing in Belgium.

On the other hand, Americans traveled to "little" Belgium, a microcosm of European civilization, a powerhouse of two complementary cultures. They discovered that Brussels was not necessarily a miniature Paris because people tried to speak decent French there, but that it had a personality and a charm of its own, subtle and enveloping. They sought out the hillsides of Walloonia, its limpid lakes, its streams and modest waterfalls, its dense primeval forests. They were intelligent travelers. In the flat country of Flanders they took to the bicycle and pedaled along the fields dotted with poppies, soaked with the blood of thousands and thousands of Belgian and English-speaking soldiers of the Great War. They read what Maeterlinck had written, what Verhaeren had sung in hammering, brutal rhythms about Flanders' greatness in the past. They even put some Belgians to shame by reading and translating the Flemish literature, abundant and dynamic in its renaissance. They invaded our museums, our time-worn cathedrals, our patrician houses of the 16th century. They walked through our venerable town halls, they played the chimes in our belfries, danced at our village festivals, observed with amazement our age-old religious pageants, where masked penitents carry enormous, wooden crosses on their bruised shoulders.

They talked to Cabinet Ministers, but they preferred to chat with the homely tippler in the café; they were equally at ease with our best scholars and the buxom waitress who, at some provincial railroad station, served them with a broad smile a sandwich which dated from the stone age. In a country not larger than one of the more modest-sized states of this Union, they were assailed every day by thousands of impressions. And so they got accustomed to seeing things not in their forceful outlines, but in their variegated hues. When they heard week-end tourists pass judgment on the delicate precision clockwork of Belgium's spiritual unity and cultural duality, they remembered that fools rush in where angels fear to tread, and they themselves behaved like angels. They came back to the States loaded with experiences of all kinds, wiser and subtler than before, profoundly enamored of Belgium even to the extent of being polite about its climate.

They are largely responsible for Belgium's reputation in this country, for its standing among the nations in the mind of the average American. Wherever one travels in the 48 states of the Union, these friends of Belgium have, through active sympathy, redressed some of the wrongs done Belgium in this war by the pathetic and panicky Reynaud. It is good to know when traveling through the U.S.A. from coast to coast that these friends are there like good Samaritans to heal Belgium's wounds, to be just when slander assails her, to be patient in explaining the intricacies of what popular fiction and brutal headlines have oversimplified. It is good to know that they are preoccupied about her starving people, about the efficiency of Allied bombing in occupied Belgium. It is a precious

thing to know that through the mere fact of knowing Belgians for a short period from first-hand knowledge and contact they have come to like and, what is far more important, to respect them.